Do you not care that we are perishing : Jesus' defeat of death in Mark's Gospel.

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"DO YOU NOT CARE THAT WE ARE PERISHING?"

Jesus' Defeat Of Death and Mark's Early Readers

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to understand the potential impact of Mark's Gospel upon its early Greco-Roman readers.

It focuses upon the role of the healing/exorcism accounts in this communicative process. These scenes forge a link with Mark's flesh-and-blood readers by:

1. strongly aligning the 'implied readers' with the suppliants in the scenes;
2. enabling the 'flesh-and-blood' readers to recognise their own world in the circumstances of the suppliants and to 'become' the implied readers;
3. thus drawing the flesh-and-blood readers into the story-world which seeks to move them by its message about Jesus and the coming kingdom.

To appreciate the impact of these stories on early readers, the thesis attempts to recover relevant aspects of the pre-understanding which Greco-Roman readers could be expected to bring to their reading of Mark. This requires a special interest in ancient perceptions of sickness and death, as well as due attention to magic, which could be either cause or cure of the afflictions.

When read from this reconstructed perspective, the healing/exorcism scenes show Jesus dealing with death.

These scenes are read within Mark's wider framework of the expectation of the kingdom of God, to be inaugurated by the resurrection of the dead.

Portrayed as a king who brings life to those under the shadow of death, Jesus would be seen as an alternative to the Roman Emperors. He had no apotheosis which removed him from death, but he truly died. His emptied tomb therefore speaks of a genuine resurrection which inaugurated the kingdom of God, and which provides genuine hope for those who continue to live under the shadow of death.

Mark's Gospel had the potential to make an impact upon the early readers' sense of mortality. Jesus had defeated death.

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ATTACHMENTS

For ease of reference, offprints of articles of relevance to this thesis which I have published elsewhere are attached after the bibliography in the following (chronological) order:

1. 'The Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels: the Equipment of the Servant', in B.G. Webb (ed.), *The Spirit of the Living God*, Part 1 (Explorations 5; Homebush West, NSW: ANZEA, 1992), 45–75.

2. 'What is the Gospel for Today's Church', in B.G. Webb (ed.), *Exploring The Missionary Church* (Explorations 7; Homebush West, NSW: ANZEA, 1993), 27–61.

3. 'What Were the Sadducees Reading? An Enquiry into the Literary Background to Mark 12:18–23', *TynB* 45.2 (1994), 369–394.

4. 'Mark 13: An Apocalyptic Precursor to the Passion Narrative', *RTR* 54.1 (1995), 10–32.

5. 'Mk 16:1–8: The Empty Tomb of a Hero?' *TynB* 47.1 (1996), 27–37.

6. 'Jesus, Daimons and the Dead', *The Unseen World. Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons, and the Heavenly Realm* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996 forthcoming), 75–102.

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To my wife, Barbara, who, for better and for worse, shares my life under the shadow of death, my fellow heir in our Lord's gracious gift of life; and to our four daughters, Grace, Jana, Sara and Alice who are kissed each night with the thought that tomorrow they might rise again.

ABBREVIATIONS

Citations in this thesis are generally by author only, although dates are also given when the potential for confusion exists. Full details can be found in the Bibliography.

Abbreviations generally conform to the practice of the Journal of Biblical Literature, the Oxford Classical Dictionary, and H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, *Greek-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ^{9}1940). The following abbreviations are used in quotations of primary sources. In the thesis, text numbers in collections of primary sources are **bold**, page numbers in normal type. [TLG] following, indicates that the source was accessed solely through the TLG computer database. I have also occasionally used a preceding ? to indicate that a translation or interpretation is either debated or possible.

ACBM	C. Bonner, 'Amulets Chiefly in the British Museum,' *Hesperia* 20 (1951), 301–45.
ANET	J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, ^{3}1969).
AnonLond	H. Diels (ed.), *Anonymi Londinensis ex Aristotelis Iatricis Menoniis et aliis medicis eclogae* (Supplementum Aristotelicum iii pars i; Berlin: Reimer, 1893) [TLG].
AthAg	D.R. Jordan, 'Defixiones from a Well Near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora,' *Hesperia* 54 (1985a), 205–55.
AthAg**IL72**	D.R. Jordan, 'A Curse Tablet from a Well in the Athenian Agora,' *ZPE* 19 (1975), 245–248.
Braund	D. C. Braund, *Augustus to Nero. A Sourcebook on Roman History 31 BC – AD 68* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).
Carlini	A. Carlini, et al (eds.), *Papiri letterari greci* (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 1978).
Carthage	D.R. Jordan, 'New Defixiones from Carthage,' in J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *The Circus and a Byzantine Cemetery at Carthage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1988), 117–134.
Cartlidge	D.R. Cartlidge, and D.L. Dungan (eds.), *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (Cleveland & London: Collins, 1980).
CIL	T. Mommsen, et al. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin: Reimer, 1862–1963).
CLE	F. Bücheler, *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1897, repr. 1921).

Diels-Kranz	H. Diels & W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zürich & Berlin: Weidmann, ^{6}1964).
DT	*Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1904).
DTA	R. Wünsch *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* (IG III^{3}; Berlin: Reimer, 1897). Reprinted in A.N. Oikonomides, *Atticae Supplementum Inscriptionum Atticarum* I (Chicago: Ares, 1976).
EJ	V. Ehrenberg and A.H.M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949).
Epig.Gr.	G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca ex lapidibus conlecta* (Berlin: Reimer, 1878).
E-W	R.H. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1992).
Farber	W. Farber, '*MANNAM LUŠPUR ANA ENKIDU*: Some New Thoughts about an Old Motif,' *JNES* 49 (1990), 299–321.
Fox	W.S. Fox, 'An Infernal Postal Service', *Art and Archeology* 1 (1914), 205–207.
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923–1958).
Gager	J. Gager (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992).
GM	F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).
GMPT	H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ^{2}1986).
Grant	F.C. Grant (ed.), *Ancient Roman Religion* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957).
IG	Kirchhoff, A., et al. *Inscriptiones Graecae* vols i–xv (Berlin: Reimer, 1923→).
Isbell	C.D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (SBLDS 17; Missoula: Scholars, 1975).
IKyme	H. Engelmann, *Die Inschriften von Kyme* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976).
Kock	T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta II Novae Comoediae Fragmenta pars I* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884).
Kotansky	R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets. The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994).

L&R.I	N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization.* I: *The Republic* (New York: Columbia University, 1951).
L&R.II	N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization. Sourcebook* II*: The Empire* (New York: Harper, 1966).
Lattimore	R. Lattimore,*Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, 1942).
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris: De Boccard, 1969).
LSSupp	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques, Supplément* (Paris: De Boccard, 1962).
McCullough	W.S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967).
MES	C. Bonner, 'A Miscellany of Engraved Stones,' *Hesperia* 23 (1954), 138–57.
MGP	D.R. Jordan, 'Magica Graeca Parvula,' *ZPE* 100 (1994), 321–335.
Montgomery	J.A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1913).
N–S	J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Magnes: Jerusalem, 1985).
NewDocs	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (7vols; G.H.R. Horsley, Vols. 1–6, S. R. Llewelyn, Vols. 6–7, eds; Sydney: Macquarie University AHDR Centre, 1981–1994).
OGIS	W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–5).
Page	D.L. Page, *Select Papyri III, Literary Papyri, Poetry* (LCL; London & Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann & Harvard University Press, 1941, repr. 1970).
Peek, GG	W.Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960).
Peek, GV	W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-inschriften* I (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955).
PDM	Demotic spells in H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ^{2}1986).
P.Giss	O. Eger, E. Kornemann, and P.M. Meyer, *Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen* (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1910–1912).

PGM	K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs (eds.), *Papyri Graeci Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974).
Ramsay	W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* Vol. 1, Part II: *West and West-Central Phrygia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897).
RG	*Res Gestae divi Augusti.* Text: EJ**1**; Translation: Sherk**26**, Braund**1**, L&RII.**2**.
SB	*Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten* (successively published by F. Preisigke, F. Bilabel, E. Kiessling, H.-A. Rupprecht; 1915–1977).
Scurlock	J.A. Scurlock, *Magical Means of Dealing With Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia* (unpublished PhD dissertation; University of Chicago, 1988).
SEG	J.J. Hondius, et al., (eds.), *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1923→).
SGD	D.R. Jordan, 'A Survey of Greek Defixiones not included in the special corpora,' *GRBS* 26 (1985b), 151–197.
Sherk	R.K. Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
SMA	C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor & London: University of Michigan Press & Oxford University Press, 1950).
Small.	E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).
SuppMag	R. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 16; Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1990–1992).
Thompson	R.C. Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, which attack Mankind.* Vol 1: *Evil Spirits.* Vol. 2: *"Fever Sickness" and "Headache", etc.* (London: Luzac, 1903 & 1904).

Most of the tablets can be abbreviated without confusion; however, it is necessary to distinguish the following:

1.III	Volume 1, tablet III
am.III	Volume 2, tablet III, Ašakki marṣûti series
ṭ.III	Volume 2, tablet III, Ṭi'i series
X	Volume 1, tablet X
"X"	Volume 2, tablet "X"
am.IX	Volume 2, tablet IX, Ašakki marṣûti series

ṭ.IX	Volume 2, tablet IX, Ṭi'i series
ṭ.VIII	Volume 2, tablet VIII, Ṭi'i series
lk.VIII	Volume 2, tablet VIII, Luḫ-ka series

TOTP	J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983 and 1985).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. The Thesis

1.1 General Orientation to the Topic

This thesis is an inquiry into the impact of Mark's Gospel on its early Greco-Roman readers. It argues that the suppliants in the thirteen healing/exorcism scenes have an important role in engaging the implied readers, and, because they represent a sample of life from the real world, the suppliants enable flesh-and-blood Greco-Roman readers to 'become' the implied readers, enter the story, and feel its impact.

Each suppliant begins under the shadow of death, but their circumstances are changed as a result of their encounter with Jesus. Their stories are told as part of a larger narrative which presents Jesus, as Son of God, as an alternative leader for the world, who leads the way into the coming kingdom of God. The early flesh-and-blood readers also lived under the shadow of death. When they entered the story through 'becoming' the suppliants, they would have discovered that the larger narrative addressed their mortality and brought the hope of resurrection.

1.2 General Orientation to the Method

The Gospel's 'powerful drama and impact'[1] is often acknowledged, but its exact nature and the means by which it is achieved awaits further exploration. In order to examine 'narrative impact', this thesis is an exercise in literary reception.

The last decades have seen a spate of studies which seek to apply literary tools to the understanding of Mark's narrative. Many such studies stop short of the problematic interface between text and world and often express scepticism about whether this divide can or should be crossed. If questions of textual impact on real readers are broached, it is usually *modern* rather than ancient readers who are in view. This thesis seeks to move beyond the literary study of Mark to its reception in the real world of first century Greco-Roman society. In order to do so, this ancient reading experience is approached

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1 Dwyer, 201. NB: Citations in this thesis are generally by author only, although dates are also given when the potential for confusion exists. Full details can be found in the Bibliography.

from two directions: firstly, 'outwards' from the text towards the textual construct known as the implied reader, and, secondly, 'inwards' from the real flesh-and-blood readers towards the text.

a) Text to (Implied) Reader

The thesis adopts a reader-oriented method. Although there are a variety of approaches with an interest in readers, the method adopted here is one which grants control of the reading experience to the text. This means that, instead of simply providing what amounts to a set of subjective impressions, the analysis seeks to identify and explain textually embedded devices which are oriented towards producing an effect in the reader.

In regard to the movement from text to implied reader, this thesis assumes the distinction, still not widely utilised in Marcan studies, between the 'story' level of a narrative (i.e. what actually happens in the narrative) and the 'discourse' level (i.e. how the narrative connects with readers).[2] Because the focus of the thesis is the interaction between text and reader, it is mainly concerned with the 'discourse' rather than the 'story', although it is artificial to suggest that the two can be discussed in isolation from one another. Although the key analytical tools used in this thesis are drawn from Booth (dynamics of distance) and Gennette/Rimmon-Kenan (focalisation), frequent reference will also be made to Fowler's work because it represents the only sustained treatment of Mark's discourse.

A key question at the 'story' level of Mark's communicative dynamics is the role played by the various character groups with respect to the reader. It is usual to identify Mark's major characters as Jesus, his disciples, and his opponents, and those left over as the minor characters. Although many studies have discussed the role of the disciples

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[2] The distinction is drawn by Chatman, 10, 19, who deals with Story in chs. 2 & 3, and Discourse in chs. 4 & 5. Fowler, 256, complains that a failure to distinguish these two levels often troubles literary analyses of Mark.

in Mark's process of communication, the key role of the minor characters has also been recognised.[3]

Since Williams has provided the fullest and most recent discussion of the minor characters, he will be another conversation partner in this thesis. He divides the minor characters into those appearing before Bartimaeus in the narrative and those appearing after him, arguing that the former play the role of 'suppliant', whereas the latter act as 'exemplars',[4] Bartimaeus being a transitional figure with both roles. I suggest that a further subdivision is possible, however, for there is a group of minor characters who change allegiance and so can be called the 'cross-over characters'.[5] These subdivisions enable a group of thirteen minor characters to be isolated,[6] beginning with the man in Capernaum and ending with Bartimaeus, who can be termed 'suppliants'[7] because they need healing or exorcism (for themselves or others) and they receive extraordinary help from Jesus (1:21–28; 1:29–31; 1:40–45; 2:1–12; 3:1–6; 5:1–20; 5:21–24a, 35–43; 5:24b–34; 7:24–30; 7:31–37; 8:22–26; 9:14–29; 10:46–52). These are the minor characters of interest to this thesis.

The role of these suppliants in Mark's communication process has not yet been satisfactorily discussed. Considering them as 'foils for disciples'[8] has effectively eclipsed their importance. Even Williams so subordinates them to the disciples that their role towards the reader is negligible. Although he admits that Mark also moves the readers to associate with characters other than the disciples,[9] he means those after and

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3 Minor characters have received attention from Rhoads and Michie, 129–135, Malbon (1986a), and, most recently, Williams.

4 Williams, 167f. refining Malbon (1989), 277.

5 The eager young man (10:17–23); the scribe (12:28–34), see Smith (1989b), 177f.; the centurion (15:39); Joseph of Arimathea (15:42–47); and Judas. Although the category is my own, these characters have often been recognised as exceptions.

6 The 'unknown exorcist' (9:38ff.) and the children (10:13–16) involve interactions between Jesus and his disciples, rather than properly being 'minor character' stories. A number of features distinguish them from the thirteen healing/exorcism scenes.

7 The term, adopted from others, is not entirely satisfactory, since the actual 'supplication' can be made by the needy person, or by someone on behalf of another, or be absent.

8 Cf. Rhoads and Michie, 132–134.

9 Williams, 151.

including Bartimaeus. His study therefore deems most important the minor characters about whom the narrative says least and overlooks the importance of those about whom it says most.

However, when the analysis proceeds beyond the story level to the discourse level, this thesis contends that the narrative most strongly identifies the readers with the suppliants in the healing and exorcism stories (see Part 2, below).

b) The (Flesh-and-Blood) Readers to the Text

The examination of the impact of Mark also requires the thesis to be, secondly, a social descriptive project. Understanding Mark has been likened to understanding a joke from another culture: 'You have to know what ideas and information are being assumed before you can "get" the meaning.'[10] Discussion of the healing and exorcism scenes has rarely delved into the ancient assumptions about the conditions represented in them, which limits the extent to which the interpreter 'gets' these scenes. Through an examination of relevant ancient literary and non-literary sources this thesis attempts to recover some of these assumptions as a step towards appreciating the impact the scenes would have made.

The flesh-and-blood readers of interest to the thesis are not Mark's 'first', or 'original', readers, but its 'early' readers, i.e. those who potentially read/heard Mark once it was placed in the public domain. If all we can say about Mark's provenance is that 'the [G]ospel was composed somewhere in the Roman Empire',[11] it makes good sense to conceive of its early readers in correspondingly general terms, i.e. as those who lived in the Greco-Roman world of the latter part of the first century.

Such generality allows the thesis to examine Mark in terms of three broad cultural features. These features are not chosen arbitrarily, but because they share vocabulary and/or concepts with Mark.

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10 Rhoads (1992), 137.

11 Hooker, 8, who adds 'a conclusion that scarcely narrows the field at all!'. This generality, however, is an asset, not a liability; cf. Bauckham (1995).

1. The expectation of the coming kingdom of God is the framework within which Mark's story is played out and its themes gain meaning. This intersects with the political framework of the Roman empire, and, in particular, with the place of the emperor within it.
2. The healing/exorcism stories, which are the main interest of the thesis, inevitably touch upon various sicknesses. They are considered as forms of 'illness', i.e. the social condition of being ill, rather than 'disease', i.e. the product of some pathological causality.[12] Such a focus avoids the *etic* question of how a modern person might diagnose an ancient disease, in favour of the *emic* question of how the ancient sufferer might have experienced it.[13]
3. Any interest in illness and *daimons*[14] in the ancient world automatically requires a corresponding interest in ancient magical practice. The various conditions experienced by Mark's sufferers are touched upon by the magical curses and spells. Jesus' treatment of these conditions has similarities to the practice of the magicians, albeit with important differences.

Mark makes its impact through engaging with early readers' 'repertoire', i.e. the conceptual baggage brought to the reading of the narrative. The particular features of Greco-Roman life discussed here would be important — if not unavoidable — components of this repertoire.[15]

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12 Douglas, 29, labelled the fallacy that the only task called for is 'scientific explanation' of the disease 'medical materialism'; cf. Pilch (1981), 108.

13 For this sociological distinction see Pike, 152ff.

14 Except in quotations from other authors, this thesis consistently uses the transliteration '*daimon*', instead of the more common English term 'demon'. Even though the English spelling finds the occasional counterpart in the sources (e.g. *P.Harris* 55 l.8–9 [2nd AD]), in popular parlance it tends to connote a metaphysical view of these beings which, I suggest, needs re-examination.

15 Although local variation no doubt existed, each is a general feature of the Greco-Roman world. There was nowhere in the empire which did not feel the effects of the emperor, or illness and death, or magic.

In seeking to recover aspects of the early readers' repertoire, the thesis has attempted to assess the evidence of primary material not sufficiently utilised in previous Markan studies. This has required the discussion of secondary material to be necessarily brief, although it will be obvious that decisions have been made with respect to textual and exegetical issues throughout the thesis. This curtailment of lengthy discussion of secondary material is not meant to suggest that this discussion is irrelevant or inadequate, but simply represents a necessary compromise allowing the less familiar primary evidence to speak, at the expense of the more familiar secondary material.

1.3 Jesus' Defeat of Death

This thesis argues that such text-to-reader and reader-to-text analysis leads to the conclusion that Mark's Jesus deals with death and many of its invasions into human life. This message would have had a high potential impact on early readers, since their world provided ample opportunity to feel the distress of human mortality.

A few studies have recognised in passing that Mark's presentation confronts the problem of human mortality,[16] but there has been no full-scale exposition of this theme. These few studies have tended to adopt a moralistic framework (cf. Chapter 1, part 2) which has inhibited the full appreciation of this theme for Mark's early readers.[17] Wegener probably comes closest to the conclusions reached here, although by vastly different means and to vastly different ends,[18] when he argues that the three major arenas of conflict in Mark all involve death, 'with the result that one might think that the overarching opponent is death itself.'[19] In arguing that Mark's narrative concerns

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16 For Rhoads and Michie, Jesus' 'way' led inexorably to death, 64, 70f., 112; his end showed the awesome nature of death, 116; the disciples were to follow to their death, 91, but were hindered by their fear of death, 125–129, and Jesus had to prepare them for it, 92, 94f., yet their fear prevailed over their loyalty, 96, cf. 92, 95, 124. Later Rhoads (1993) repeats much of this and shows that he regards 'death' largely as a metaphor, as does Olson.

17 Cf. Rhoads and Michie, 127–129, 139f.

18 Wegener, 3, 7, 80, 199, 209. His work explores responses to Mark expected from a fairly closely defined set of modern American readers, 'independent of how ancient auditors may have understood it' (p.2).

19 Wegener, 78; cf. Rhoads and Michie, 100, 96, following Kort (n.31).

Jesus' defeat of this opponent, this thesis also endorses Robert Smith's insistence that Jesus battles the 'dark powers' of human existence (demons, illness, and death).[20]

Having sketched the general orientation of the thesis, three features require further introduction: the role of the suppliants in Mark's overall rhetorical strategy, and the place of magic and the emperor in first-century Greco-Roman society.

2. The Role of the Suppliants

The suppliants, i.e. the minor characters involved in the healing and exorcism scenes, play a key role in the communication process between Mark and its readers. Discussions of Mark's narrative dynamics, however, have tended to overlook their role in favour of that played by the disciples.[21]

2.1 The Role of the Disciples: 'Weak' Identification

The relationship between reader and disciples is usually described as 'identification'. Although this supposedly 'natural'[22] process normally occurs with the protagonist, Jesus is said to be too exalted and removed from the readers which causes them to identify with the disciples instead.[23] This 'identification' is in the 'weak' sense of the readers recognising a character as a role model.[24] The characters are therefore labelled 'exemplars', and discussion centres upon their positive and negative traits of (moral) character.[25] It is 'weak' because it assumes a distance between the character and the reader which is crossed when the reader makes a rational choice to adopt a particular character as their exemplar.

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20 Smith (1984), 342, although the usual exemplary approach still protrudes (e.g. p.343).

21 Literary studies focusing on the disciples stretch from Tannehill (1977), Tannehill (1980), through Rhoads and Michie, to Shiner and Wegener .

22 Cf. Tannehill (1977), 392; Tannehill (1980), 70, 82f; Wegener, 7, 65, 69f.

23 Wegener, 212. Dewey argues for 'identification' with Jesus (for values) and the disciples (for situation). She mentions that Tolbert argues for identification *with Jesus* (p.98).

24 Tannehill (1977), 392.

25 'The narrator indicates which characters are approved and which scorned in the narrative world', Dewey, 97.

Thus, Tannehill's influential presentation assumes 'identification' of the 'weak' type. The reader identifies with the disciples in the initial call scenes (1:16–20; 3:13–18; 4:10–12; 6:7–13) because these scenes provide a strongly positive portrayal of them,[26] but a shift later occurs and the disciples are increasingly evaluated negatively (4:35–41; 6:45–52; 8:14–21),[27] until the passion narrative pictures them in strongly negative terms and the story ends with their failure.[28]

However, the 'strongly positive portrayal' of the disciples amounts, in total, to 'their immediate, unquestioning compliance'[29] with Jesus' call. Apart from this, the narrative contains no devices which close the distance between disciple and readers, who remain 'observers'.[30] The initial scene (1:16–20), for example, by erecting the expectation that the disciples will become 'fishers of men', certainly 'commissions'[31] them for their narrative role, but this commissioning is clearly a subset of Jesus' commissioning. These expectations are erected by a promise on his lips: '*I* will make you fishers of men.' The call to follow invites the readers to read further watching Jesus to see whether and how he achieves this goal on the disciples' behalf, but, since they remain observers, this is not identification in any strong sense.

Despite its key role in previous discussions, this 'weak' concept of identification has major inadequacies.

1. Its assumption of an autonomous and sovereign reader who must appropriate the story by means of 'choosing to identify' is an impoverished understanding of the act of reading. It is far too uni-directional and uni-dimensional and

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26 Tannehill (1977), 394, 396; Tannehill (1980), 69–70; cf. Williams, 27–34; Wegener, 74.

27 Tannehill (1980), 70.

28 Tannehill (1980), 82.

29 Wegener, 108.

30 As Wegener, 109, himself admits — perhaps inadvertently.

31 Tannehill (1980), 62, 64f.

minimises the role played by the text itself. The more power granted a text to engage the reader, the more inadequate this view becomes.[32]

2. It reflects a functional view of character,[33] in which the plot is all important and the characters within a story, because subordinate to that plot, are of only typological interest.[34] This entails an interest in the (moral) character of characters, almost solely in terms of the 'traits' that can be distilled from their narrative presentation.[35]

3. The assumption that Mark is operating within a moralistic framework such as that of Aristotle, or Theophrastus, or other ancient philosophical writers,[36] begs, amongst other things, questions of genre and purpose,[37] as well as of the societal level of Mark's audience.

4. These assumptions encourage the tendency to overlook or disregard important rhetorical features of Mark's narrative. Greater attention to the dynamics of distance, i.e. how features of the text encourage the increase or decrease of the distance felt between the reader and the various parties in the text,[38] and focalisation, i.e. the mediation of a perspective (not necessarily that of the narrator) in the text,[39] is essential if the notion of 'identification' is to be helpful, and, once these dynamics are taken into account, the 'weak' sense of identification becomes increasingly inadequate. While an

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32 Cf. 'A large part of our thought-stream is taken over, for at least the duration of the telling, by the story we are taking in', Booth (1988), 141.

33 Chatman, 108–113; Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 3; Culler, 230.

34 Tolbert, 349.

35 For example Rhoads and Michie, 130; Williams, 176; 177; 181; 183; 186f.; 173; 202–205.

36 Tolbert, 348, refers to the typological nature of all character depiction in ancient writing, citing Theophrastus, but can his Aristotelianism, which would encourage such an interest, cf. Malbon (1989), 278, really be generalised? Gill, 469, complains about Theophrastus' 'relative triviality' and lack of clarity and shows that ancient writers' interests were more complex (pp.469f., 472f.).

37 Even *bioi*, to which Mark seems most akin, pursued various purposes; cf. Burridge, 149–152.

38 For the concept of 'distance', see Booth (1983), 155–158, 243–266. Dewey, 99, mentions the importance of 'distance and perspective', but she apparently means distance between narrator and reader, rather than character and reader.

39 Rimmon-Kenan, Ch. 6, drawing on Gennette. Despite the 'visual' metaphor, it includes cognitive, emotive and ideological orientations (pp.71, 79–82). Dewey uses the distinction, but underestimates its importance (p.102).

exclusive interest in character 'traits' encourages a rationalistic/moralistic approach to the text, attention to the emotional features of the text,[40] for example, leads to a greater appreciation of the potential impact of the text upon real human beings. Despite the obvious value of attention to plot movements and character traits, if an approach ignores notions such as focalisation and the dynamics of distance, it cannot be said to have dealt adequately with the narrative, for these things are crucial to the narrative engagement of the reader.

5. The quest for character 'traits' also leads interpreters to overlook important features of the text. For example, it is an interesting feature of Mark's healing and exorcism scenes that, while traits of character are distilled only with effort, the text itself always provides detail about the characters' circumstances, sometimes at some length. Although the interest in (moral) character is entirely appropriate within a moralistic framework informed by a philosophical interest in the progress of the soul, this descriptive material suggests that Mark is more interested in the physical (including the social and emotional) state of his characters, than the moral.[41]

In fact, the focus upon the role of the disciples, with its associated interest in character traits, has meant that the role of Mark's healing/exorcism stories in the communicative process has been virtually overlooked,[42] despite these scenes being a major portion of Mark's early narrative and an important vehicle for his portrayal of Jesus.

The trait approach has also led interpreters to be more attracted to the minor characters in the text after Bartimaeus than those before him, since their brief treatment makes them amenable to being regarded as 'types'.[43] The characters in the

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40 Cf. Booth (1983), 86.

41 This is also true for the disciples. In contrast to other Greco-Roman call stories, Mark's presentation of the call of the disciples ignores any moral changes and highlights the forsaking of property, family and profession; Shiner, 196.

42 Cf. Tannehill (1980), 67; Wegener, 76f.

43 They are either so strongly subordinated to the disciples, cf. 'foils for the disciples', Rhoads and Michie, 132–134, or to the disciples and the minor characters after Bartimaeus who are disciple-replacements), Williams, cf. Tannehill (1977), 405, that the importance of their narrative role is lost.

healing/exorcism scenes are described too richly to act as types. They have circumstances, needs, relationships, names, addresses, physical, social and economic problems; they are too much like real people! As such, they are not so much 'exemplars' of what readers *ought to be*,[44] but, as representatives of the world of which the readers themselves are part, they are pictures of what readers *already know themselves to be*.[45] In other words, the role of these characters towards the reader involves 'identification', understood in a strong sense.

2.2 Strong Identification

It is more helpful to think of identification in the stronger sense that the readers somehow recognise themselves in a character and 'find [their] subjectivity in that representation'.[46] Rather than readers (arbitrarily?) choosing to adopt an ethical exemplar, the narrative is so constructed that it engages the readers and makes them see things as if they stood in a character's shoes.[47] If 'identification' is the feeling of *being* the character in some sense, then it is, in fact, only one end of a spectrum of possible distance relations between readers and characters:

> In any reading experience there is an implied dialogue among author, narrator, the other characters, and the reader. Each of the four can range, in relation to each of the others, from identification to complete opposition, on any axis of value, moral, intellectual, aesthetic and even physical.[48]

The more 'identification' is defined in terms of the readers' sense of *being* the character, the less satisfactory the notion becomes as the sole description of the role of the disciples in Mark. This role is complex and, since it changes as the narrative

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44 Cf. Rhoads and Michie, 132.

45 Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 33, although characters within a text 'are by no means human beings in the literal sense of the word, they are partly modelled on the reader's conception of people and in this they are person-like'.

46 Cohan and Shires, 137.

47 'My consciousness behaves as though it were the consciousness of another' (Poulet), from Booth (1988), 139.

48 Booth (1983), 155.

progresses, dynamic.[49] As the disciples are one of the three major character groups (with Jesus and his opponents) who appear practically from the start to the finish of the narrative, the reader has plenty of opportunity to evaluate them against the various narrative norms, and, as is common knowlege, they do not always perform well under such evaluation.

However, this actually excludes the disciples from being those with whom the reader identifies (in the strong sense), since strong identification with a character occurs most powerfully when the character is not evaluated at all — let alone negatively.[50] The presentation of their non-evaluated viewpoint creates the sympathy which leads to the feeling of 'identification'.

> She must be accepted at her own estimate from the beginning, and that estimate must, for greatest effect, be as close as possible to the reader's estimate of his *own* importance. Whether we call this effect identification or not, it is certainly the closest that literature can come to making us *feel events as if they were happening to ourselves.*[51]

2.3 Strong Identification in Mark

When the disciples are assessed against such criteria, it becomes clear that they are not the characters who create the strongest sense of 'identification' in Mark's readers. Their sustained evaluation across the course of the narrative works *against* strong identification. The narrative only rarely uses textual devices which encourage the readers' sympathy, and so identification, with them. To be sure, when these devices do appear, they are present at key points in the story and their presence ensures that the disciples do have a role vis-à-vis the reader, but they are usually accompanied by evaluation.[52] Greater attention to these features would certainly strengthen the understanding of the disciples' reader-oriented role, enabling the discussion to move

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49 This is acknowledged by Tannehill (1980), 69ff., whose presentation vastly improves on, e.g. Weeden, but still needs to go further. These two represent the extremes of opinion on the disciples, see Dewey, 98. 'Complex' is preferable to her 'ambiguous' (p.97).

50 See the discussion in Booth (1983), 274–277, commenting on Miranda, the heroine of Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1936).

51 Booth (1983), 276f., my italics.

52 Dewey's list of devices supposedly encouraging closeness is demolished when the content is dealt with as well as the formal indicators, for they are almost always accompanied by negative evaluation; Dewey, 101.

beyond the normal shallow 'exemplar' paradigm.[53] But, having acknowledged that the complex relationship between disciple and reader involves some 'identification', it must be said that this is by no means all that is involved in this relationship, and, more significantly, that they are not the characters with whom the text encourages the greatest identification.[54]

This position is occupied by the suppliants. In terms of items which promote strong identification with a character,[55] Mark presents these characters statically, often revealing what they see, think, feel, or know; and, despite the attempt by some to say otherwise, the norms erected by the story do not encourage a negative evaluation of them.[56] The reader sees their situation, and often even the main character in the story, through their eyes. Even though the narrator is not completely absent in these scenes, and his presence potentially threatens close identification by encouraging the readers to adopt an observer's stance, in fact it merely strengthens their sympathy with the character.[57] The various situations of these characters are often described rather fully,[58] decreasing the distance between them and the reader and slowing the narrative tempo enabling them to come into even greater prominence. In short, these characters are the ones who are presented in such a way as to promote 'identification' in the strongest sense.

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53 Even within a moralistic framework, her more complex treatment leads Dewey, 103, to move away from the emulation model, concluding that the suggested comparison between readers and disciples 'is not a question of the implied reader emulating the disciples' behavior; rather both the disciples and the implied reader are to live according to the behavior demanded by Jesus.'

54 Cf. Wilder, 65, who noted that we recognize ourselves in the minor characters.

55 Booth (1983), 274–277.

56 Williams, wrongly, as we shall see, attributes 'disobedience' to most of these characters, preventing him from acknowledging how important they are to the story.

57 Often the readers are moved to the observer's role after the identification with the character is complete, in order that they might 'see' the interaction between Jesus and 'their' character.

58 Admitted by Dewey, 101, who misses the significance of this observation, despite being aware that 'showing [=a reducer of distance] is heightened by the the sheer quantity of information, the inclusion of unnecessary concrete details and by direct speech' (p.99).

2.4 Mark's Reading Dynamics: A Model

This thesis builds on a previously-outlined model which described Mark's reading dynamics in terms of six interlocking 'stories'.[59] The 'Main Story' about Jesus is set against the 'Big Story' of the kingdom of God,[60] promised in Israel's past, but expected in the future. The 'Counter Story', telling of Jesus' opponents, the 'Vacillating Story', of Jesus' disciples who oscillate between times of being for Jesus and times of sharing the hard-heartedness of his opponents, and the 'Episodic Stories', i.e. when other 'minor characters' interact with Jesus, all work together to make an impact upon the 'Readers' Story', in order to move them to adopt a stance towards Jesus and the kingdom of God.

This model assigns the disciples a very important role towards the reader which is both complex and dynamic. In brief, the disciples provide a source of a continuity between scenes and across the narrative which the minor characters cannot. The healing and exorcism scenes, however, are 'not progressive but reiterative.'[61] But, far from being 'subordinate' to the material which forms 'a sequence leading toward the passion story, the narrative climax of the Gospel',[62] this thesis seeks to show that the two types of material work in a complementary fashion in order to achieve Mark's narrative impact.

This model proposes that these scenes play the very important role of forming a bridge from the story-world into the real world. Or to put it in reverse, these 'suppliant' characters provide the existential entrance for the early readers of the Gospel. This thesis aims to explore how this occurs through an analysis of the relevant scenes,[63] and the impact they achieve.

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59 Bolt (1993), 43–49. A similar model could be distilled from Rhoads and Michie, Chs. 4 and 5. Cf. Tannehill (1980), 63ff.

60 Cf. Rhoads and Michie, 73–75.

61 Tannehill (1980), 67.

62 Tannehill (1980), 67.

63 Dewey, 106, also calls for a scene-by-scene of the narrative to test her theory of twofold identification (see n.15). The argument here suggests that the suppliants need to be factored into the equation.

3. Illness and Death

For a modern reader to appreciate the early impact of Mark's healing/exorcism stories, a first-century perspective on the illnesses concerned must be regained.

3.1 Illness

Ascertaining the social impact of an illness involves a range of questions such as: what did people think about the conditions? what was it like to suffer them? what were the anatomical/ physiological/ pathological understandings of these conditions? what were the fears they evoked? what was the usual approach to dealing with them?

It requires very little imagination to discern in the Hippocratic case studies, for example, the great distress and human misery accompanying the progress of disease.[64] Those who died (approx. 60%) endured the disease for anywhere between 2 and 120 days, with an average length of survival of 19.4 days; while those who survived had to endure the disease for anywhere from 3 to 120 days and suffered an average of 34.8 days of illness.[65] Mark's healing/exorcism stories give another sample of life in this kind of world.

3.2 The Shadow of Death

First-century people lived perpetually under 'the shadow of death'. Although accurate statistics remain a desideratum, people under the empire probably had an average life expectancy of around 20–25 years,[66] and probably only 40% of the

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64 For example, great pain in various parts of the body, violent and continuous headaches, ulcerated throats and suppurating ears, vomiting and diarrhoea, speech disturbances and deafness, paralysis, boils and abscesses, difficulty breathing, convulsions, delerium, rigor, coma, bleeding from various orifices, and so on, and all with no analgesics, antibiotics or other benefits of modern (post-war!) pharmacology.

65 My calculations are based on the 42 cases in which length of illness is specifically mentioned. Beyond these there is only one other case, which is declared to be beyond help. Combining both groups, yields an average of 24.4 days of illness.

66 Although deriving statistical information from tombstones is fraught with difficulties, and results are 'highly approximate' (Wiedemann, 14f.) those from Roman tombs suggest average life expectancies were 22 years for men and 20 years for women (p.15); those from Egyptian studies suggest a life expectancy of *ca.* 30 (*NewDocs3*, **11**).

population reached that age,[67] with only 50% of children reaching their tenth birthday. Illness was a part of the fabric of ordinary life and, without the advantages of modern medicines and health measures, it regularly brought the threat of death to the home.

The very brevity of life would have made illness even harder to bear, as recognised long before the first century in the *Prayer of Kantuzilis for Relief from his Suffering*:

> Life is bound up with death, and death is bound up with life. Man cannot live for ever; the days of his life are numbered. Were man to live for ever, it would not concern him greatly even if he had to endure grievous sickness.
>
> (ANET[3], 400–401)

3.3 The Treatment Protocol

Although an older age — and perhaps their Stoic descendants — may have believed that 'there is no escaping disease sent by Zeus' (*Od.* ix.410), many across the centuries sought such an escape. Despite modern guesses that the inadequacy of first-century medical treatment would cause people to 'flock to faith healers and miracle workers',[68] the situation seems to have been a little more complex.

In his suffering, Kantuzilis prayed to the gods, '... grant me life. Would that my god, who for[sook] me, [might take] pity on me!'. But the gods were not the only healing service available. There were the physicians — who in the first century would still be disciples of Hippocrates, 'that prince of medicine' (Pliny *HN* 7.51.171; cf. Apul. *Flor.* 19) — and there were magicians, and it seems that stiff competition prevailed amongst the various remedial agencies.[69]

Although it would be foolish to suggest that people turned to these various resources in exact sequence, the evidence suggests that there was a loose protocol. So, for example, a sequence is suggested in the report that, in the Athenian plague (431

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67 These figures are based upon Ulpian's evidence (3rd AD), in comparison with Frier's population studies of Mauritius in the 1940's; see Wiedemann, 15.

68 Meyer (1983), 33.

69 King, 115.

BC), the physicians were no help, nor were prayers to the gods, nor oracles, so the people abandoned all these things (Thuc. 2.47).

The physician knew that he could only help in certain conditions. In fact, part of the skill of being a good doctor — and so keeping one's reputation intact in the competitive environment that existed — was to know which cases properly belonged to the art and which did not. Although the physicians were certainly meant to provide what little assistance they could, a large part of their role apparently consisted of discerning the signs in the course of the illness which would enable them to predict whether the patient would live or die (cf. Hipp. *Prog.* Chs. 1; 20; 24; 25). This was an important task, because physicians' reputations depended upon the accuracy of their predictions.

When the physicians could not help, it was time to call upon the gods. Asklepios, for example, was a good second option, since

> he often saves people after all medical efforts have failed to [liberate them] from the diseases binding them, if only they turn to him in worship, however briefly.
>
> (P.Oxy 1381=Cartlidge, 121–125 [2nd AD])

Through an oracle, the gods may also provide help with the all-important question of whether the patient would live or die, and, when the gods failed, the magicians could be of service:

> People with chronic diseases, when they have despaired of ordinary remedies and customary regimens turn to expiations and amulets and dreams.
>
> (Plut. *De facie* 920B)

They could provide additional assistance in predicting the outcome through some 'prognostic of life and death' such as Demokritos' "sphere".[70] Consisting of numbers on two registers, it was used as follows:

> Find out what day of the month the sick one took to bed. Add his name from birth to the day of the month and divide by thirty. Look up on the

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70 Cf. the use of diagnostic 'wheels' in other circumstances. We know of other ancient prognostic calculations; cf. Brashear (1995b), 210 nn.1 and 2.

> "sphere" the quotient: if the number is on the upper register, the person will live, but if it is on the lower register, he will die.
>
> (PGM XII.351–64)

Magicians could help in other ways, for when 'an infection festered or a fever lingered, even the sternest critics of traditional or "superstitious" remedies turned to the application of amulets.' The cases of former critics turning to magic

> represent a plausible picture of competing cures and "second opinions" as a disease worsens and seem to set the use of amulets squarely within the sphere of traditional beliefs.[71]

Even the physician Galen prescribed amulets as part of his regimen, although he denied the traditional explanation of their success.[72]

The magicians may have been especially useful if there was any suspicion that the illness had itself been caused by magic. If Pliny was right that in the seventies 'there [was] no one who [was] not afraid of curses and binding spells' (*HN* 28.4.19),[73] then this also implies that 'everyone' probably used amulets to protect themselves against the diseases inflicted by malevolent magic.[74]

Some kind of protocol can be discerned even within the Jewish Diasporic context. Ben Sirach's prescribed behaviour for the Israelite is clearly set against the normal procedures of the Greek (Sir 38): they are to pray first, but then call the doctor and don't let him leave! The discovery of amulets on the fallen soldiers of Judas Maccabeus (2Macc 12:34–39) showed that the practice had made inroads even amongst the Jews, whose law forbade such things, and magic was evidently familiar to those at Qumran. Josephus' comments on 1Samuel 16 may even suggest that physicians called on the magician in difficult cases. When Saul's spirits caused him to be 'beset by strange disorders',

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71 Kotansky (1991), 107, referring to Pericles and Bion.

72 Gager, 221.

73 Cf. the question to the oracle, 'Am I under a spell?' (P.Oxy 1477 [3rd/4th AD]).

74 Gager, 220.

> the physicians could devise no other remedy save to order search to be made for one with power to charm away spirits and to play upon the harp.
>
> (*AJ* 6.166; cf. 168, 211)[75]

Does this reflect Josephus' knowledge of first century (Palestinian) practices? If so, whereas the Greek protocol seems to have been: physician→ God→ magician, the Ben Sirach and Josephus texts suggest that the Jewish protocol was: God→ physician→ magician.

The fact that physicians used magic, magicians used 'quasi-medical' means, and priests also used magic in some quarters, would have eased the patient's transition from one to the other.

Part of the legacy of nineteenth century scholarship is the desire to distinguish too sharply between magic, science and religion,[76] or, 'magic, medicine and miracle'.[77] Although attempts to make this tripartite distinction absolute, or to set it within some evolutionary framework, should be eschewed, it is clear that it is not simply a product of the nineteenth century since evidence for it can be found even in antiquity (e.g. Hipp. *Morb.Sacr.* 4). There was certainly a great deal of overlap between them, but, nevertheless, when illness struck the home, there was a protocol through which a patient could pass. There were those known as physicians, there were the gods, and — perhaps outside those more respectable services — there were also those known as magicians.

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75 David's musical abilities against *daimons* may lie behind the development of extra psalms for this purpose; cf. 4Q510–511; 11QPsAp^{a}; 4Q560.

76 For a critical discussion of the distinction in nineteenth century scholarship, see Phillips (1988); Phillips (1994).

77 This is the title of Kee's book.

4. Magic in First-Century Greco-Roman Society

4.1 A Magical Renaissance

The study of ancient magic is currently enjoying a renaissance[78] as new texts and better readings of old texts continue to emerge, which illustrate ancient magical praxis stretching across centuries.[79]

Spells and curses have been gathered from the Ancient Near East, the Greco-Roman world, and from later Coptic Egypt. Discoveries have also illuminated the role of magic within Judaism, where the previous conclusion that the era of the Second Temple was a magical time — drawn from a wealth of indirect evidence from later sources (such as the Aramaic Bowl Texts, Rabbinic Sources, Sepher ha-Razim, Ḥarba de Mosheh, PGM IV.3009–3085; Hadrametum tablet)[80] — has now been endorsed from Qumran.[81]

Since several of the worlds represented in these sources overlap with that of the New Testament, even these cursory observations indicate that such discoveries are important for the study of its communication in its early environment. As the current renaissance continues to establish that magic was an integral part of the ancient world, it becomes increasingly important to ask how the hearing of the gospel message would have been affected by the magical conceptions which were a part of readers' repertoires.

4.2 Magic and Gospels Studies

This renewed interest in ancient magic has made minimal impact upon NT studies in general and Gospel study in particular. Several problems can be identified.

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78 Meyer and Mirecki, 1. The scholars in this volume are representative of this renaissance.

79 Even Hull, Ch. 2 mentioned 'new' discoveries and publications when the floodgates were barely open.

80 For an overview of Jewish magical sources, see Alexander.

81 Cf. 4Q560, Penney and Wise; 4Q184, 4Q510–511, 11QPsAp^{a}, Burrelli, Ch. 1.

4.2.1 Few Studies

In 1974 Hull observed that 'the possibility of a relationship between magic and the early Christian tradition has never been fully explored,'[82] and then embarked upon an attempt to do so with respect to the Synoptic Tradition. There has been only the occasional example of such a study since his time.[83]

4.2.2 Unused Sources

Another problem is that often the full range of magical sources were either unavailable, or underutilised, by this small trickle of studies. The curse tablets, in particular, are conspicuous by their virtual absence, despite them being the best magical source in existence, attesting to magical practices throughout the Greco-Roman world and across more than a thousand year period,[84] even though several collections have been available since the turn of the century (DTA; DT).

4.2.3 A Focus on the Historical Jesus

Operating within the paradigm of a previous age and using its methods, with the characteristic quest for origins and the subsequent source questions, previous studies have largely focused upon the relationship between magic and the historical Jesus. However, the recent shift of paradigms has led to approaches to the Gospels which have moved away from an interest in origins, to an interest in readers and their reception of whole texts. In line with this shift, the relationship between magic and the Gospel as a narrative whole is yet to receive attention.[85]

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82 Hull, 1.

83 Smith (1978); Kee, Ch. 4; Mills and Twelftree (1993) both touch on magic; Garrett, on Luke; Arnold on Ephesians. I know of no work dealing with the Gospels of Mark, Matthew or John from a magical point of view. Malina and Neyrey on Matthew is only an apparent exception, for this work employs modern sociological models with no reference to ancient magical texts. The commentaries make minimal reference to magic, although Gundry is a recent exception.

84 More than 1100 have been recovered from all parts of the ancient world, dating from about 600 BC to AD 600. In addition, their existence and use are amply attested in the literary sources from Homer onwards; cf. the testimonies from Homer, Plato, Ovid, Tacitus, Apuleius, Plotinus, Eusebius of Caesarea and others are conveniently collected in translation in Gager, ch. 8; and the originals in DT, cxvii–cxxv.

85 Cf. Garrett on Luke.

4.3 Magic and Greco-Roman Society

4.3.1 A Widespread Phenomenon

Commenting on excavations in Corinth and Athens, David Jordan recently spoke of 'more and more evidence, often from coastal cities with heterogeneous populaces, of a community of superstition in the *oikoumenê* in the time of the Empire.'[86] The Egyptian magical papyri have been known for some time (=PGM), but recent discoveries are confirming that these do not simply represent an eccentric brand of late Greco-Egyptian magic, but are, in fact, representative of magical practices on a far wider scale. The evidence is increasing that 'the medium through which details of such lore passed from one end of that world to the other was often the papyrus codex or scroll of magical recipes, of which we have dozens from Egypt.'[87]

This is an important finding, especially for NT studies in which the supposed eccentricity, and/or the late dates of many of the papyri, partly account for the reluctance to use 'magical sources' (i.e. PGM!).

4.3.2 A First-Century Phenomenon

The dating question is complex, but there are a number of factors which suggest that, with due caution, even later material can be used for first-century comparative purposes. In the first place, it is not true that all magical papyri post-date the NT era, even if most do. There are five older magical papyri: a curse found in a metal box (6th BC);[88] another curse (PGM XL [4th BC]); a series of charms against headache and inflammation (PGM XX [2nd/1st BC]); and two love charms (PMonGr. inv. 216=GMPT CXVII [1st BC]; SuppMag**72** = GMPT CXXII [Augustan]). The pickings from the 1st century AD are meagre,[89] but from then on the numbers begin to swell. The main problem with papyri is survival. Being an organic material, it is not

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86 Jordan (1994a), 123.

87 Jordan (1994a), 123; cf. Jordan (1996), 119.

88 Jordan (1996), 123.

89 PHarris56 (1st/before 2nd AD). Brashear (1995a), 3491f., lists others assigned to the first century, but this dating is not without dispute: PGM XVI (Jordan: 2nd/3rd); CXI (GMPT: 3rd/4th AD); XV? (GMPT: 3rd AD); XXXa, XXXIb and XXXIa as oracular questions are excluded (so GMPT).

surprising that the bulk of papyrus finds have come from Egypt, where the dry sands have ensured better survival of this material. But papyri have also been found elsewhere, perhaps because they were inside metal containers, or, in one case, a sheet of lead.[90] The more durable lead curse tablets testify in their own right to the existence of magic across the millennium spanning the NT period. They also endorse the spells found on papyrus by providing evidence that some of their practices are much older than the papyri themselves, as do voodoo dolls discovered from as far back as the 4th century BC, precisely made according to the recipe found in the much later PGM.[91] When this kind of physical evidence is placed alongside the presence of some older papyrus spells, it is safer to suppose that many more papyrus spells once existed, but have been lost, than that they never existed at all.

Secondly, since the later papyri almost certainly represent collections of much earlier material, and since magical practices were conservative, or even reactionary,[92] the age of the spells they contain moves closer to the NT period.

Thirdly, the literary evidence provides ample testimony to magic being practised well before, and into, the NT period, as does the NT itself (cf. Acts 19:19).[93]

4.3.3 A Wide-ranging Phenomenon

Although not officially sanctioned, magic was practised everywhere and was a social phenomenon with a wide-ranging purview. The curse tablets, for example, were directed at a wide variety of situations of ordinary human commerce. Since they potentially affected people from all races, classes, occupations, ages and genders, they were universally feared. In the seventies Pliny could say, 'there is no one who does not fear to be spellbound by curse tablets' (Pliny *HN* 28.4.19). Similarly, the magical

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90 Jordan (1996) 5. He lists papyrus finds in seven non-Egyptian locations.

91 For example, PGM V.304; VII.394, 417; IX; XXXVI.1–35, 231; LVIII; Faraone (1991a), n.5.

92 Possible evidence includes the continued use of lead, even when other mediums were available; retrograde writing, which may have become '... "petrified" in the ritual and henceforth assum[ing] greater significance,' Faraone (1991a), 7–8; and perhaps even the use of foreign words as if their efficacy depended upon their non-translation.

93 A range of literary testimonies is conveniently collected in Gager, Ch. 8.

papyri confirm the many and varied reasons for which people would turn to the magicians, and, since these are magical recipes for the use of a professional magician, no doubt each one represents a market demand beyond an individual occurrence of a spell.

One of the interests of magic was illness, since illness and *daimons*,[94] medicine and magic were closely related in the ancient world. The curse tablets often attacked people's health; the spells were often concerned to protect it, or to cure them once afflicted.

4.3.4 Magic and Death

Although magic was used for a variety of purposes,[95] in the face of the natural fear of suffering and death, a major motivation to use magic concerned people's desire to stay alive. As Euripides so contemptuously put it:

> I can't stand people who drag out their life
> with food and drink and magic spells,
> so that they might not die.
> Since they're no use to the world, they should clear off
> and leave it to the young.
>
> (Eur. *Supp.* 1109ff.)[96]

People turned to magic as a desperate resort to stave off death — in all its forms. 'Magic [...] enticed the workaday person with a means of escaping a creation fraught with uncertainty and anxiety, a world that in the end could not itself provide a promise of health in its present society nor safety in the life to come.'[97]

As we shall see (Chapter 3, Suppliant #1), magic also enlisted spirits of the dead to perform the various tasks assigned them by the magician. The world of magic was therefore intimately connected with death and with the dead. Both these connections will prove important for the potential impact of Mark on the early readers.

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94 Although this can be exaggerated, e.g. Yarbro Collins (1992b), 47: 'virtually all health problems were ascribed to the influence of demons.'

95 Cf. the list in Goldin, 117, the chapter headings in Gager, or the index in GMPT.

96 This translation is based on that of Garland, 123.

97 Kotansky and Spier, 329, adding 'Magic and Gnosticism claimed they could do both.'

5. The Emperor in First-Century Greco-Roman Society

5.1 Emperor Worship

By Mark's day, Roman rule had been firmly in place for many years. The structures shoring up the position of her chief man, such as the imperial cult, were gradually making inroads into the provinces,[98] assisting the task of subjugating the elite and, through them, the local populations.[99] The symbolism of the cult not only 'evoked a picture of the relationship between the emperor and the gods, but [it] was also structuring; it imposed a definition of the world. The imperial cult, along with politics and diplomacy, constructed the reality of the Roman empire.'[100]

5.2 Apotheosis

An important part of this 'construction of reality', which was gaining momentum at exactly the time when Mark was being first read, was the apotheosis of the emperor after his death. Eventually it would reach such fulsome proportions that it would become so conventional that it was devalued, but in the middle decades of the first century, it was still a live issue. Julius Caesar and Augustus after him had become gods and the mythology surrounding Romulus' translation had been reissued in support (cf. Livy 1.16).[101] Claudius was the first emperor to be granted divine honours since Augustus. Some idea of how this was received can be gained by Seneca's satirical mockery of it in his *Apocolocyntosis* in which Augustus himself asked 'was it for this I made peace by land and sea?' (10). In Mark's time, the apotheosis of the emperor was still a live issue.

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98 For its remarkable growth from Augustus to Claudius, see Winter (1994); Spawforth; Winter, (1995).

99 It created a relationship of power between the subject and the ruler; it enhanced the dominance of the local elites over the populace, one city over another, and Greek over indigenous cultures. 'The cult was a major part of the web of power that formed the fabric of society', Price, 248.

100 Price, 248.

101 Segal (1980), 1347.

5.3 Son of God, Beginning of Good News

Because Caesar had become a god, Augustus, and then his successors, were hailed as Son of God.[102] The Augustan poets used the phraseology to promote the fame of their emperor.[103] Since the Augustan age was regarded as a turning point for the world,[104] the birthday of the divinised Augustus was proclaimed throughout the provinces in the calendar inscriptions set up by city officials[105] as 'the beginning of good news through him for the world' (ἦρξεν δὲ τῶι κόσμωι τῶν δι' αὐτὸν εὐανγελί[ων, OGIS **458** = EJ **98** = Braund **122** [9 BC]). As time went on this Augustan rhetoric became standard fare in the imperial propaganda, as the emperor's kept the 'Augustan Hope'[106] alive.

5.4 The Emperor as the Source of Life

The propaganda associated with the emperor, repeated in the provinces as part of the imperial machinery, naturally set the emperor in a positive light. Augustus as 'the beginning of good news' evolved into the emperor being viewed as 'the source of all good things' ([ἀρ]χὴ ὤν | πάντων | ἀγαθῶν, P.Oxy 1021.5–13 [17 Nov 54, on Nero's accession]). Seneca spoke as if the emperor was the source of life for all:

> As long as [the emperor] is alive your dear ones are alive — you have lost nothing. Your eyes ought to be not only dry, but even happy; in him you have all things, he takes the place of all.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 7.4)

When the imperial cult is properly understood as a social institution with broad social effects,[107] it can be seen how it would endorse the view of the emperor as the source of life.

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102 Cf. inscriptions from the West: EJ **100** = Sherk **7C** = ILS **112.7** = CIL XII.4333 = Lewis-Reinhold, p.62f: Narbo, Gaul (AD 12/13).

103 Cf. Wistrand, Ch. 6.

104 Price, 54.

105 They therefore provide an 'upper class' perspective, cf. Wengst, 10.

106 This phrase was inscribed on a coin on Claudius' accession (AD 41), (Small. **98** = Braund **209**).

107 Mitchell (1993), 117.

Of course, such 'golden age' views were those of the elite, the pro-Romans, the collaborators who stood to gain from the empire — such as the Herods and the Jerusalem religious establishment. There was also a dark underside of Roman domination, and, despite Augustus, 'the poverty, misery and uncertainty caused by Roman economic exploitation',[108] especially in the provinces, continued, as did the long trail of blood left in the wake of the establishment and maintenance of the Pax Romana.[109] The empire was not without its critics, but their voices were not as loudly proclaimed.

The great Augustus had probably improved the lot for some,[110] but for many the rhetoric outstripped the reality. It was said that he brought peace and security, but the Pax Romana was built on military might. It was said that he brought salvation from the ills of a now bygone day, and yet the ills of ordinary people's lives continued. It was even said that he brought life to a world on the brink of death.

5.5 Life from the Dead

The inscriptions notifying calendar changes to allow for the greater celebration of the Augustan achievements proclaimed that:

> people would be right to consider this to have been the beginning of the breath of life for them, which has set a limit to regrets for having been born.[111]

Against the horrors of the previous century, the imperial propaganda proclaimed that Augustus had saved the world from inevitable destruction. Given the perceived importance of the imperial institution, when Seneca suggested a soliloquy for the young

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108 Price, 54.

109 For a view 'from below', see Wengst.

110 Deissmann (1927), 339, believed that the lot of 'the humble classes [...] had undoubtedly been on the whole improved by the Imperium'; cf. the sailors' praise of Augustus in Suet. 2.98.2. For a less positive analysis, see Wengst.

111 Translation: Price, 55.

emperor Nero, it was natural that he should stress the tremendous power that Nero had inherited from those before him:[112]

> Have I of all mortals found favour with heaven and been chosen to serve on earth as vicar of the gods? I am the arbiter of life and death for the nations; it rests in my power what each man's lot and state shall be, [...]'
>
> (*De clementia* 1.1.2)

> To give safety to many and to recall them to life from the very brink of death and to earn the civic crown through clemency — that is happiness. [...] This is divine power, to save life in mobs and states; but to kill many and indiscriminately is the power of conflagration and collapse.
>
> (*De clementia* 1.26.5)[113]

In the second century, Aelius Aristides' view 'from above' praised the end of the controversies between cities brought by Rome as an escape from certain death, for

> as a consequence of their mutual discord and unrest the cities were already as it were on the refuse heap; but then they received a common leadership and suddenly came alive again.
>
> (Eulogy of Rome, 155–7)

5.6 Mark's Alternative

In contrast to this positive assessment, Mark was part of a movement which, in effect, proclaimed a new emperor.[114] For them, there was now another source of life for the world. Mark's Gospel proclaimed an alternative kingdom: the kingdom of God. It spoke of Jesus in terms associated with the emperor, and, by so doing, proposed an alternative view of reality which offered an alternative set of hopes for the future. Mark's Gospel was subversive in that it undermined the claims of the imperium to be the source of life for the world and so joined forces with those imperial critics who suggested that Rome had instead extended the shadow of death across many nations. It proposed that the true source of life for the world was found in the gospel of Jesus

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112 *De clementia* is a famous example of 'a well-known rhetorical device to praise a man for virtues that you hope he will practice', Wistrand, 72. In his *Apocolocyntosis* Seneca may attempt to move Nero in the virtuous direction using a different genre.

113 Cf. Ps-Seneca, *Octavia* 438–44, which has Seneca urging clemency against Nero's desire for blood.

114 Deissmann (1927), 340.

Christ, and that he brought life to those who found themselves living under death's shadow.

6. Procedures

In an attempt to examine Mark's Gospel in terms of its potential impact upon its first-century readers, the thesis follows the narrative shape of Mark, commenting in detail on the thirteen healing-exorcism accounts of particular interest to this text/reader encounter, and more briefly on the narrative 'framework' within which they are embedded.

The text-reader encounter will be considered along two rather broad axes: (1) The Text to the (Implied) Reader; (2) The (Flesh-and-Blood) Reader to the Text. Hence, each healing/exorcism scene will be examined in two parts:

1. an exegetical/literary analysis attempts to demonstrate that the text aligns the suppliant with the implied reader.
2. a discussion of relevant Greco-Roman material attempts to recover the perspective by which the particular suppliant's situation would have been viewed by Mark's early readers.

The comments on the remainder of Mark will be necessarily briefer, aiming to elucidate the framework of the story into which the readers are drawn by way of the healing/exorcism scenes. By this means, the thesis attempts to unfold the potential impact of Mark's message about Jesus' defeat of death on the early readers who were living in the empire under the shadow of death.

Chapter 2: The Beginning of the Gospel (Mk 1:1–13)

1. Mark's Title (1:1)

Although it is not the place to argue the point, it is most likely that Mark 1:1 functions as a title.[1] Since τὸ εὐαγγέλιον would be familiar to Mark's readers as the basic (oral) message by which the Christian movement sought to persuade others,[2] Mark's work promises to show the foundation[3] of gospel proclamation by anchoring the message — and the movement spawned by it — in the events to be narrated.[4]

The narrative promises to make its impact upon the readers through engaging them in the story of 'Jesus Christ, [the Son of God][5]'.[6] Although the key words of Mark's title are firmly anchored in expectations generated by the OT,[7] the Greco-Roman readers would recognise this language from its usage in connection with the emperor. The Augustan phraseology, whose currency continued across the first

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1 Despite Guelich (1983); Guelich (1982), 194–196, similar expressions in papyrus letters show that it is perfectly possible for the expression καθὼς γέγραπται to begin a new sentence, and a work. I hope to present the evidence in a future article, although the point has already been made by Deissmann (1901), 113f., 249f.

2 Friedrich, 735f.

3 Lucian *Reviv.* 20, uses ἀρχή for the 'foundation' of a philosophical position.

4 So van Iersel, 41.

5 These words may not be original here, so Head, although 'Son of God' is nevertheless an important title in Mark (1:11, 3:11, 8:38, 9:7, 12:6, [some include 13:32], 14:36, 61, 15:39).

6 In terms of genre, the title already signals that what follows will be akin to 'biography'; cf. the thesis of Burridge.

7 Gospel: in a number of ways Mark's story presents Jesus' ministry as the fulfilment of the Isaianic promises (cf. Isa 52:7; 61:1), not the least of which is that his proclamation of the gospel of God (1:15) 'bears the stamp of Isa 52:7', Stuhlmacher, 20.

Son of God: The older designation of Israel as the 'son' of God (Ex 4:22f; cf. Hos 11:1), became focused upon the Davidic king, and, through this association, gained a firm place in Messianic expectation (2Sam 7:12–14; Ps 89:4ff.; 1Chr 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; cf. Isa 9:5; Ps 2:7); Hengel (1976), 22f. These 'textual' expectations, i.e. they can be derived from the text, were also 'actual expectations', i.e. they demonstrably formed part of the expectations of real, historical people. This can be shown not only from the NT itself, but also from Qumran — 4QFlor I.11f. transfers 'I will be his father and he will be my son' (2Sam 7:14) to 'the shoot of David', i.e. the Messiah (cf. Isa 11:1). It also quotes Psalm 2, although the text breaks off before v.7 appears; 4Q246 in connection with Danielic eschatology, mentions the son of God who will reign in an eternal kingdom — and also the rabbis, in which 'the messianic reference of Ps. 2.7 and other similar passages is not completely lost', Hengel (1976), 44.

century, proclaimed him to be Son of God, and his birthday to be the beginning of glad tidings, with the associated claim that he and his line were the source of good things, and the source of life for the world. Greco-Roman readers would immediately connect Mark's opening line with imperial propaganda. The oddity would be that it referred to someone other than a member of the imperial line.

Although it may well be true that the 'official, secular state religion was at best a negative stimulus, not a model,'[8] Mark's provocative opening immediately makes claims for Jesus over against the imperial propaganda, raising a range of questions for the world which had supposedly benefited so much under Augustus and his successors. If the subject of Mark's story is also given imperial titles, what is the inevitable destruction from which this Son of God saves? In what sense will this Jesus be 'the beginning of the breath of life for them'?[9] Is this gospel about someone who also considers himself to be the 'arbiter of life and death for the nations' (Sen. *De clem.* 1.1.2)? Will his leadership make the world alive again (Aelius Arist. *Eulogy to Rome*, 155–157)? And, if so, how?

Like the rest of the NT, Mark speaks the language of its day.

> It is a popular and realistic proclamation. It knows human waiting for and hope of the εὐαγγέλια, and it replies with the εὐαγγέλιον ... Caesar and Christ, the emperor on the throne and the despised rabbi on the cross, confront one another. Both are evangel to men. They have much in common. But they belong to different worlds.[10]

2. THE PROLOGUE (1:2–13)

Mark's 'prologue' offers the readers a 'panoramic view'[11] of events prior to Jesus' preaching in Galilee. It sets the story of Jesus against the backdrop of the prophetic expectation (vv. 2–8). John comes as the fulfilment of the Isaianic

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8 Hengel (1976), 30.

9 Cf. the calendar inscriptions, Price, 55.

10 Friedrich, 725.

11 Such views are frequent at the beginning of narratives or scenes, Rimmon-Kenan, 77. 'The prologue engages readers directly and gives them a vantage point from which they can appropriate the ensuing narrative,' Wegener, 99.

expectation of the voice which would prepare the way of the Lord (Isa 40:3); his baptism looks to the coming of the forgiveness of sins; and he speaks of the coming stronger one who will baptise in Holy Spirit.[12]

The fulfilment theme continues with Jesus' baptism. The readers are privileged to see with Jesus the heavens rent (cf. Isa 64:1) and the Spirit descending upon him (v.10; cf. v.8, and Isa 42:1, 61:1), and to hear the voice from heaven (v.11). This further reliable commentary matches, in part, that of the narrator (v.1) and gains in reliability through scriptural allusions declaring Jesus to be the messianic Son of God (Ps 2:7) and the Isaianic servant of the Lord (Isa 42:1).[13] This scene commissions Jesus, i.e. provides him with the role which he is expected to fulfil in the course of the narrative to follow.[14]

Immediately after the baptism, Jesus is thrust into the desert by the Spirit,[15] where he was tested by Satan, in the presence of wild beasts, but served by angels (1:12–13). The function of this imagery is not easy to analyse precisely, for it is capable of both positive and negative connotations. However, in view of the interest of this thesis, it can be noted that both the wilderness and the beasts can connote death, and that even the positive connotations (e.g. the beasts of Isa 11) draw some of their power by contrast with the connotations of death. In addition, one traditional way of speaking about the resurrection presents them both as 'places' from which the dead would be received back in the resurrection.[16]

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12 Bolt (1991b) 46f.

13 The presence of scriptural allusions in a given text is often disputed, and here is no exception. There are several items in the Markan context in favour of the Isaianic allusion: the expectation generated by the quotation from Isa 40:3, since, in the flow of Isaiah, the servant would follow the voice; the coming of the spirit upon him; the prominence of Isaianic themes in the remainder of the Gospel.

14 Tannehill (1980), 60–62.

15 Appropriate for the Servant, whose ministry to Jerusalem was 'a new exodus [...] a new march on the promised land from the wilderness,' Dumbrell, 106.

16 Cf. the texts discussed in Bauckham (1993). Although most of the texts are later than Mark, the tradition may have OT roots (Isa 26:19; cf. esp. 4Ezra 4:41b–43a; b.Sanh. 92a), (p.279) and it is attested in texts dated 50–150 AD, which makes plausible the suggestion of its earlier representation.

By providing the readers with privileged background information, the prologue begins to forge a close relationship between narrator and readers. Already Jesus is at centre-stage, and, via reliable commentary provided by the narrator (1:1) and God himself (by both Scripture and a heavenly voice), the readers have been given an understanding of who he is and what he is expected to achieve.

Chapter 3: The Kingdom is Near (1:14–4:34)

The patterns and flow of the narrative suggest that the first major movement of Mark's story stretches from the call of the four fishermen (1:16–20) through to the end of the parables discourse (4:1–34).[1] This first major section is divided into four subsections each signalled by Jesus' presence παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν (1:16; 2:13; 3:7 [πρός]; 4:1). This division is reinforced by the occurrence of πάλιν in the second and fourth instance and the presence of large crowds in the second, third and fourth subsections.

In each subsection, the seaside location introduces some kind of call: Simon and Andrew and the brothers Zebedee (Subsection 1); Levi (Subsection 2); the complete number of the twelve (Subsection 3). After this threefold calling of disciples, the reader expects something similar when the narrative returns to the same location for the fourth time, but what occurs instead, through the vehicle of the parables discourse, is the general summons for 'anyone with ears to hear' to hear.

The prologue has already begun to commission Jesus for his role in the narrative. By the end of this first narrative section all major characters of Mark's Gospel are assembled and commissioned.

1. The Kingdom is Near (1:14–15)

1. Text to Reader

The announcement of John's 'handing over' indicates that it is time for the one coming after him to arrive. Having been educated by the prologue to think of Jesus in Isaianic terms, it is no surprise that Jesus now begins to go public with his message, nor that this message is styled 'the gospel of God' (cf. Isa 41:27; 52:7; 61:1f.).

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1 This proposal crosses several structural barriers with long-established credentials. These are largely the legacy of source criticism, e.g. that 2:1–3:6 represents a collection of 'conflict stories', and the current increase in literary awareness ought to re-open all such questions.

The narrator permits the readers to hear the content of this gospel for themselves by placing Jesus' message in direct speech (v.15). It contains a note of fulfilment (πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρός and ἤγγικεν), suggesting that all God had promised was coming to its conclusion, and also a note of expectation for the announcement that kingdom of God 'has drawn near' indicates that it has not yet fully and finally come, but that it is about to.

The call for his Galilean hearers to repent and to believe the gospel is a call to reorient their lives (perhaps, 'once again') towards God, and to trust the promise about the future kingdom being near. Since this call is directed to no-one in particular and since the readers hear it in direct speech, it is as if it is addressed to them. Jesus' announcement has the effect of setting the whole of the following story within the framework of the expectation of the coming kingdom of God.

2. Reader to Text

Although Mark's Greco-Roman readers may have known next to nothing about any Jewish expectations of a coming kingdom of God, the language of kingdoms would, of course, be familiar to them. In addition, the announcement of a coming kingdom would automatically raise the question of the relationship between it and the prevailing rule of Rome. The Romans frowned upon kings not appointed by their regime, and upon kingdoms not permitted by their own (eg. Tac. *Hist.* 5.9). The gods had given the rule to them and, in fact, when the two great emperors of the past had died, they had joined the ranks of the gods themselves, so what was this kingdom of God announced by Jesus?

Mark's title had announced Jesus in terms suggesting that he was an alternate emperor. Jesus himself now proposes an alternate kingdom to Rome. Readers would be well aware that to speak this gospel would be fraught with danger for it would inevitably lead to conflict with imperial power. If so, what would this entail for those who accepted Jesus' invitation to reorient their lives around this gospel of the kingdom?

2. To Fish for People (1:16–20)

This scene provides another aspect of Jesus' narrative commissioning (cf. p. 6). It is focalised through Jesus, who sees the brothers in the sea (v.16). The seeming redundancy of Mark's explanatory γάρ clause signals its significance. Jesus' direct speech provides a command to 'come after me' and a motivation to do so in the promise to make them 'fishers of men'. The previous redundancy now enables the emphasis to fall on their new harvest: human beings. Their immediate response (v.18) adds to the sense of Jesus' authority. The scene is virtually repeated with the other brothers. Although it is completely narrated, the readers supply the content of Jesus' call (v.20) from before (v.17).

The first pair left their nets to follow Jesus (v.18), the second, their father and the servants (v.20, cf. 17). As the four fall in behind Jesus, the movement of the story begins. His goal is the future kingdom of God (1:15), which evidently involves taking people with him, requiring them to leave their ordinary lives behind. Since the narrative has commissioned Jesus to make something of these men, the readers now watch to see whether and how he will turn them into fishermen catching human beings.

3. Suppliant #1: A Man with Unclean Spirit (1:21–28)

1. Text to Reader: Unclean Spirits Obey

Apart from the initial plural (v.21), the disciples are absent from the scene and cannot act as a 'role model' for the readers. Instead, the text aligns the readers with the man in need.

The narrator introduces Jesus' teaching (v.21), presumably the message spoken previously (1:15), and opposes its authority with that of the scribes (1:22).[1] The scene is focalised through a man in the synagogue through a description of his condition (v.23, ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) and the provision of direct speech (v.24). The distance between him and the readers is reduced when he shows an insight into Jesus' origin and identity which approximates what they have learned through reliable commentary (cf. 1:1, 9, 11). Since the scene aligns the readers with him, he functions not as a 'type' providing the 'opportunity for Jesus to illustrate the authority of his teaching',[2] but a character whose tragic situation (possession) remains in focus throughout the incident (vv.23, 24, 25, 26).

By using unexpected plurals, his two questions suggest that his possession is worse than initially suspected: the first puts distance between Jesus and 'us'; the second asks whether Jesus has come to destroy 'us'. When the action switches to Jesus, the readers become observers. Reverting to the singular, Jesus rebuked 'him' and ordered the spirit to be muzzled and to come out (v.25). It did so after attacking him with a huge cry (v.26). Since the narrator's description of the fulfilment echoes Jesus' order, the readers' perception of Jesus' authority is enhanced.[3]

The ensuing events reinforce this authority. The readers are drawn into the people's amazement and also, through the provision of direct speech, into their

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1 For explanatory γάρ clauses as explicit narrative commentary, see Fowler, 92–98; Cf. Gundry, 73.

2 Williams, 94.

3 Fowler, 75.

discussion (v.27) which functions like 'interior speech'.[4] The debate concerns the newness of the teaching which is further explained as having an authority which demands the spirits' obedience. Amazement will be a feature of Mark's account,[5] and this scene has effectively grafted the notion of Jesus' authority onto this emotion, all the more so because the narrator's comment has already presented this as the important feature (v.22). Thus, when the report about Jesus goes out everywhere (v.28), it issues from amazement at an authority which even commands the obedience of unclean spirits.

Although the demonstration of Jesus' authority is the burden of the scene, the character is not a mere type. The scene aligns the readers with him and Jesus does not exercise his authority in isolation from this victim of unclean spirits, but on his behalf. The crowd's amazement arises from Jesus commanding these particular spirits, in this particular man. As such, this man 'introduces a new type of contact with Jesus. The possessed man is not called on to follow Jesus, but rather he is simply helped by Jesus.'[6] He is the story's first suppliant.

This first contact with a suppliant raises questions regarding Jesus' person (v.27, cf. 22) and his expected activity, which will abide throughout Mark's narrative. The unclean spirit(s) asked two questions (v.24), neither of which received a definitive answer. The first suggested that Jesus and the spirits were on different sides. The second, and more important, question asked whether Jesus was going to destroy them. Jesus did not answer this question and the exorcism itself is not presented as their destruction, merely as their obedience (v.27).[7] The crowd's discussion opens the question of Jesus' identity: who is he, if he teaches with such authority? Because no answers are provided, this is 'not the direction of declarations, but the indirection of unanswered questions.'[8]

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4 This is another form of explicit commentary, Fowler, 125.

5 Fowler, 122f., considers that amazement is Mark's desired outcome. Cf. Dwyer.

6 See Williams, 94, who then argues that the reader does not identify with him for this reason.

7 *Pace* Gundry, 76.

8 Fowler, 126.

Questions play a very important role in the narrative's impact upon the readers. All questions provide implicit commentary upon the story,[9] but unanswered questions are particularly powerful, for they

> [...] implicitly solicit a response by the reader at the level of discourse. They prod the reader to think about the question and to compose an answer of her own, or at least to begin to work toward that end. [10]

Being already privileged with information about Jesus' identity, the readers could answer the characters' question about Jesus' true identity (v.27). The question nevertheless engages the readers in the story, for they wish to see whether and how the characters discover the answer for themselves.

However, the spirits' questions are different. Although it is the first time these beings appear in the story, they already share the readers' insight into Jesus — to some degree at least. They apparently know who Jesus is, but do not know what he is going to do with them. Since the readers do not know the answer to this question either, they are even more powerfully engaged with the story because they too wish to find out whether this is his goal. This unanswered question adds to Jesus' commissioning, since, having also opened up a gap in the discourse,[11] it 'hangs over' the narrative and awaits an answer: has he come to destroy them?; and, if he has, how will he do it, and why?

2. Reader to Text

The expression ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (1:23), introduces the readers to a description of a spiritual presence which occurs ten times in Mark,[12] but elsewhere only in Biblical materials or in texts dependent upon them.[13]

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9 Fowler, 131–132.

10 Fowler, 132. The danger with unanswered questions is that interpreters try to answer them, instead of feeling their weight and waiting for the narrative to provide the answer in its own good time.

11 'Gaps' can be opened in both story and discourse levels. Here a gap is opened in both.

12 1:23, 26, 27 (pl.); 3:11 (pl.), 30; 5:2, 8, 13 (pl.); 6:7 (pl.); 7:25.

13 TSol 3:6; PGM P13, P13a (4th/5th AD); P10 (6th AD); P17 (5th/6th AD). Cf. also the ?Christian spell P.Fouad. inv. 123 (1st/2nd AD) which calls the addressee(s) ἀκάθαρτ[α], Benoit. Although unprovable, the two occurrences in medieval scholiasts (*Schol.Aeschin.* in or. 1.23; *Schol.Dem.* in or. 4.1b) probably represent biblical colouration from a Christian scribe.

2.1 Unclean Spirits I

Being unattested in the Greek materials, the phrase would be unfamiliar to Greco-Roman readers. However, the spirits' fear of destruction (v.24b), their attempt to control Jesus by knowledge of the name (v.24ac), his word of command insisting they come under control and come out (φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε), and perhaps the great cry as the spirit left (v.26b) can all be paralleled in magical practice (see below). This conceptual overlap would allow the Greco-Roman readers to assimilate the unusual phrase 'unclean spirit' into their general framework. Since the 'spirits' involved in magical practice were usually called δαίμονες,[14] it would be natural for the readers to understand these 'unclean spirits' by what they already know about these more familiar beings. This assumption will be confirmed for them as the story proceeds, for Mark soon aligns the two (1:23, 26, 27; cf. 1:32, 34).

To introduce the discussion of these beings, the Capernaum exorcism can be compared with a formulary from a much later period (PGM IV.1227–64).[15] This 4th century AD manuscript contains Coptic insertions of some biblical names for God, 'Jesus Christ', 'Satan', and even 'unclean spirit'. However, if these can be regarded as late accretions and duly ignored, the Greek sections may be reminiscent of an original practice unsullied by Judeo-Christian conceptions. This handbook instructs the exorcist to say:

> I adjure you, *daimon*, whoever you are (ἐξορκίζω σε, δαῖμον, ‖ ὅστις ποτ' οὖν εἶ), ...
>
> Come out, *daimon*, whoever you are, and withdraw from so-and-so (ἔξελθε, δαῖμον, | ὅστις ποτ' οὖν εἶ, καὶ ἀπόστηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ δεῖνα), quickly, quickly, now, now. Come out, *daimon* (ἔξελθε, δαῖμον), since I fetter you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I hand you over into the black chaos into destruction.
>
> (PGM IV.1239–41, 1243–48)

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14 It is doubtful whether the preference for δαιμόνιον in the NT, LXX, Philo and Josephus is a deliberate avoidance of the more 'loaded' term δαίμων so familar to the Greek world, (*pace* Foerster, 12), for they appear to be used interchangeably. Apparently Chrysippus also preferred δαιμόνια (so Brenk, 2107).

15 Due to the lack of earlier material, any comparative work on exorcisms in Greek must inevitably be done with material later than Mark.

The nature of the *daimon* to be cast out by this spell is hinted at in the phrase 'whoever you are'. Since this formula frequently occurs in the magical materials referring to the unknown spirit of a corpse, its use here suggests that the *daimons* dealt with in this ritual were regarded as ghosts of the dead. In fact, this is exactly what many Greco-Romans would have thought of when they heard the term *daimon*.

2.2 Daimons and the Dead

The more usual assumption in Biblical studies, derived from the Jewish intertestamental material, is that these beings are some kind of fallen heavenly beings. Such conceptions, however, would be foreign to the conceptual framework of the Greco-Roman readers of interest to this thesis.[16] Instead of conceiving of the *daimons* 'from above', many of Mark's flesh-and-blood readers would have conceived of them 'from below'.

As I have argued elsewhere,[17] there was a very clear connection in the ancient world between *daimons* and the dead. With this conception in their repertoire, these readers would recognise in Mark's stories of *daimons* the continued activity of the spirits of deceased people. For them, the *daimons* were not fallen heavenly beings; they were ghosts of the dead. Although surveys of NT demonology acknowledge this fact,[18] it is usually left to one side, and so has made practically no impact upon the explanation of NT passages relating to *daimons*. Since this thesis seeks to understand Mark against this ancient view of *daimons*, its virtual absence from NT studies justifies a rather lengthy survey of the supporting evidence. However, given the constraints of space, a summary of my previous findings will have to suffice.

A vocabulary study of the δαίμων / δαιμόνιον family demonstrates that the *daimons* were connected with the dead in literary sources and magical practice, and that

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16 It may be comparable to Empedocles' and Plato's notion of the personal *daimon* given a soul at generation, and 'falling' with the soul to the bodily realm, but the differences are patent, and the result is still a close link between the human soul and the *daimon*.

17 Bolt (1996a).

18 For example, Foerster, 6; Twelftree (1992), 164.

it even finds its way into the literature most akin to Mark, ie. that originating in a Jewish context, but written for Hellenistic readers.

2.2.1 Literature

This link is a persistent feature of the literary sources[19] from Hesiod (pre 700 BC; *Op.*, 121ff.), through the tragedians,[20] and into New Comedy (last quarter 4th BC – 264/3), where Menander's notion that each man is guided by a *daimon*, whether good or evil,[21] logically precedes the *daimon* as the spirit of the departed. Despite Plato's elaborate *daimonology*,[22] he still allows Socrates to derive the notion of a personal *daimon* from the older understanding of the *daimon* as the spirit of the (heroic?) dead:[23]

> ... when a good man dies he has a great portion and honour among the dead, and becomes a *daimon*, [...]. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is *daimonic* (δαιμόνιον), and rightly called a *daimon* (δαίμονα).
>
> (Pl. *Crat.* 398B–C)

While continuing the idea of the *daimons* as intermediate beings, both Xenocrates (head of the Academy 339–314 BC), and the greatly influential Posidonius (*ca.* 135 – 51/50 BC), called the souls of the departed δαίμονες. A previous incarnation is implied by Xenocrates' notion of a 'survival' (Plut. *De defectu* 417B),[24] and, although the Stoics in general avoided the δαιμ- vocabulary, Posidonius apparently taught that 'if souls persist, the same souls become *daimons*' (Sextus Empericus 9.74 = Loeb III.I.74).[25] In addition, according to Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics (?Posidonius) believed in *daimons* and heroes. Since the latter were 'the souls of the righteous that have survived

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19 It can be detected elsewhere, e.g. in the existence of places where souls of the dead could be consulted, and in grave inscriptions; Brenk, 2071, 2143.

20 Aesch. *Pers.* 620ff., 642, 630; *Cho.* 125; Eur. *Alc.* 1003, 1140; cf. 843–4.

21 Cf. Plut. *De tranquil.* 474B. Plutarch disagrees in favour of Empedocles' notion of two forces mingled within each person.

22 Plato uses δαίμων in four senses: lower divinity (*Apol.* 27c–e); departed soul (*Crat.* 397e–398c); intermediate spirit (*Symp.* 202d–203a; *Leg.* 4.713d; *Resp.* 617e; *Ti.* 40d, 42e); guardian spirit (*Resp.* 620d; *Phd.* 107d; cf. Socrates' *daimonion* and its importance in middle Platonism).

23 Cf. *Phd.* 107D–108B; *Resp.* 469A, cf. 427B, 540C; *Leg.* 717B–718A.

24 Heinze, 83.

25 Heinze, 98.

their bodies' (τὰς ὑπολελειμμένας τῶν σπουδαίων ψυχάς, D.L. 7.151), this was also probably true of the former.

The evidence in Plutarch (AD 50^{-}–120^{+}) indicates that such ideas persisted in philosophical circles into and beyond the time of the NT period. During the extended discussion of *daimonological* views in *De defectu oraculorum*, it is clear that the same connection is still known and debated, as it is in some of his other writings.[26]

In another place (*Dion* 2; cf. *Caes.* 49.11; *Brut.* 36–37), because of his regard for Brutus and Dion, Plutarch reluctantly commends[27]

> that most extraordinary doctrine of the oldest times, that mean and malignant *daimons* (τὰ φαῦλα δαιμόνια καὶ βάσκανα), in envy of good men and opposition to their deeds, try to confound and terrify them, causing their virtue to rock and totter, in order that they may not continue erect and inviolate in the path of honour and so attain a better portion after death than themselves [the *daimons*].
>
> (*Dion* 2)[28]

This ancient view clearly assumes that the *daimons* are spirits of the dead and vice versa, and suggests they are malevolently active in this world in order to ruin the performance of the living so that their post-mortem lot is worse than their own.

Given the immense importance of Plutarch as a source for ancient *daimonological* views,[29] it is significant for the purposes of my argument that, alongside the presence of the *daimons* as intermediate beings, his writings also illustrate the connection between the *daimon*s and the spirits of the dead and this may actually be his most basic belief.[30]

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26 See *Symp.* III.7 655E; *Cons. ad Apoll.* 109C–D; *Parall. Graec. et Rom.* 308A; *Quaest. Rom* #51, 277A; *Apoph.Lac.* 236D. It is even present in the essays containing fairly elaborate *daimonology*: *De facie* 944C; *De gen.* 591C, cf. Hesiod, *Op.*, 121ff.; 591D–F, where the analogy with the retired athlete (593D–E) indicates 'once more that for Plutarch *daimones* seem primarily to be former souls', Brenk, 2124.

27 According to Brenk, 2128f., he disagrees with this view (from ?Chrysippos), cf. *Brut.* 37, but the language seems to indicate a tentative suggestion.

28 Cf. Tatian *Or.* 16.1.

29 Brenk, 2082. He has played such a key role in *daimonological* studies that it is perhaps true to say that modern studies have not progressed beyond his own presentation. Smith (1978), 436, finds this remarkable.

30 Brenk, 2124f., 2127f.

2.2.2 Magical Practices

This connection was assumed by 'spiritistic'[31] magical practice in which the ghosts of the dead are used to achieve the magicians' ends, as is often clear from the context of usage: spells and curses often used corpses and graves in their rituals; they have been found in graves — even in corpses' mouths (PGM XIXa) or hands (SGD1 & 2) —, or other places connected with the underworld, such as chthonic sanctuaries, or wells.[32] This is not simply because such places were convenient 'openings' to the underworld deities, with the corpse being used like a 'pillar-box',[33] but, insofar as these spells are 'letters', many are addressed to the corpse,[34] either in an attempt to enlist help in gaining the power of an underworld god, or to enlist the ghost itself.

Many of the spells in the Magical papyri show that the *daimons* manipulated by the magician were spirits of the dead.[35] Invoking the ghost of the corpse was such a standard feature of the magical procedures, that, in time, the practice generated a special word. Many later spells are addressed to a νεκύδαιμον (PGM IV.361, 397, 368; IV.2031, 2060; V.334; XII.494; XIXa.15; SuppMag**49**;[36] cf. IV.1474f. τὰ εἴδωλα τῶν νεκύων; XVI.1, 9, 17f., 25, 34, 43, 54, 61, ?67, ?73). Peculiar to magical texts, this word makes explicit what other spells practise: they are addressed to spirits of the dead, ie. ghosts.[37]

The curse tablets confirm that *daimon*s were connected to the dead. The use of such tablets for cursing enemies, part of the malevolent magic mentioned in the literary sources (e.g. Pl. *Resp.* 364B), is attested for the first century, as is the general understanding that these tablets were used in the attempt to enlist the forces of the dead (Tac. *Ann.* 2.69, in regard to Germanicus' death, AD 19).

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31 Its counterpart is 'natural' magic; cf. Langton, 42.

32 See Jordan (1980), 231f.

33 Garland, 6, 86, following Kurtz and Boardman, 217.

34 Cf. Faraone (1991a), 4; Jordan (1980), 234.

35 For details see Bolt (1996a), 89–91.

36 Jordan (1988a), 245–59.

37 Jordan (1988a), translates both νεκύδαιμον and δαίμον 'ghost' in SuppMag**49**.

In the earlier tablets, the corpse is not regarded as a power at all, but its very inertness is the key to the efficacy of the curses. But a change occurs in about the 4th century BC, and the dead become powers to be invoked.[38] About this time also the spirit of the dead begins to be called δαίμων (DTA**102** [4th BC];[39] DTA**99** [3rd BC][40]), a usage which is amply attested in the later tablets.[41] As in the magical papyri, the later curse tablets also address the νεκύδαιμον,[42] the *daimon*(s) of this place[43] or those buried here,[44] or even '*daimons*, those roaming about in this place',[45] i.e. the grave or cemetery. Although occasionally the νεκύδαιμον is given a name,[46] i.e. that of the corpse, more frequently it is addressed as the *daimon*, 'whoever you are', i.e. the anonymous corpse.[47]

To sum up the magical evidence: the curse tablets provide evidence that the spirits of the dead were evoked as powers since the 4th century BC and at that time they were also called *daimons*. The tablets and the papyri show that this belief in the *daimons* as the dead eventually became enshrined in the term νεκύδαιμον. It is in the midst of this progression — which amounts to a strengthening of the same belief — that the Gospel writers spoke of Jesus casting out *daimons.*

2.2.3 Hellenistic-Jewish Literature

The connection between the *daimons* and the dead and its exploitation in magical practices can also be discerned in the LXX, Ps-Phocylides, Philo and Josephus, all of

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38 For this paragraph, Bravo.

39 Bravo, 203.

40 Bravo, 204f.

41 See, for example, the 3rd century AD tablets discussed in Jordan (1994b), 131–143.

42 DT**234, 235, 237, 239, 240, 242** — all 1st–3rd century AD; SGD**152, 153, 160, 162**; BM1878.10–19.2 see Jordan (1994a), 123 n. 22; SuppMag**42.11f; 46.**

43 DT**22, 38** (= SuppMag **54**), **198**, cf. **234.**

44 DT**25, 26, 29, 30, 31, [32, 33], 34, 35, 271**; SuppMag**45.**

45 DT **38** (= SuppMag **54**) ll. 35f.: δ[αί|μο]νες οἱ ἐν τῳ τόπω τού[τω.] φοιτῶντες ...

46 SuppMag**37, 47, 50**; PGM XXXII and, for the formulary allowing such insertions, IV.2180.

47 DT**234, 235, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, [249]** — all 1st–3rd century AD; AthAg**12** (mid 3rd AD).

which are similar to Mark, in that they stem from the Jewish milieu, but seek to communicate in a Hellenistic environment.

In the LXX, the δαιμ- group associates idolatry with the worship of *daimons*,[48] which is closely linked with the dead and with magic.[49] Isa 65 (esp. 3, 11), reflecting as it does necromantic practices, i.e. calling on the dead to aid the living, illustrates all three features in the one passage.

The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides (30 BC– AD 40) show a knowledge of magic,[50] and probably assume the connection when it warns

> Do not dig up the grave of the deceased (τύμβον φθιμένων), neither expose | to the sun what may not be seen, lest you stir up the *daimonic* anger (δαιμόνιον χόλον).
>
> (PsPhoc 100f.)

For the sake of his Hellenistic audience, Philo equates the angelic beings of the Jewish literature with the *daimons* (as intermediate beings) of the Greek literature, but the very fact that the *daimons* are also placed upon his continuum of souls indicates that they are related (*Somn.* 1.135–141; *Gig.* 6–12), if not explicitly equated (*Gig.* 16) to souls. The connection emerges very clearly when Philo reports that Gaius murdered his father-in-law 'after dismissing all thought of his dead wife's *daimons*' (πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς δαίμοσι τῆς ἀποθανούσης γυναικός). This incidental reference (*Legat.* 65) shows that the connection existed in Rome in AD 39–40 and, given the lack of either critique or explanation, that it was part of the repertoire of both author and audience.

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48 Dt 32:17; Isa 65:3, 11 (S δαίμων; A B δαιμονίῳ; MT שֵׁד); Ψ 96 (95):5; 106 (105):37.

49 All occurrences in Tobit (3:8, 17; 6:7, 7, 13, 14, 15, 17; 8:3) refer to the *daimon* Asmodeus, whose sole function is to kill, and whose 'exorcism' is achieved by magical means; Isa 13:21, 34:14, Bar 4:7, 35 (cf. Rev 18:2) use the topos of a destroyed city being filled with *daimons*/ghosts; and Ψ 91 (90):6 (Sm δαιμονιώδης) was appropriated by magical texts for centuries, cf. Burrelli. More generally, prohibitions against magical practices indicate that these were also part of things Canaanite, as was human sacrifice, thus connecting idolatry, magic, and *daimons* /ghosts.

50 #149 explicitly refers to magic; but magical practices may also lie behind ##100–102 (rather than grave-robbery for medical dissection) and #150, despite the fact that this has apparently not been canvassed previously, cf. Van der Horst.

Several passages in Josephus assume the connection between the *daimons* and the dead,[51] but on one occasion he actually defines the *daimons* as ghosts of the wicked, bent on human destruction (*BJ* 7.185; cf. *AJ* 8.45-49).

2.2.4 Summary of Findings

It would be too much to claim that all people everywhere automatically connected the *daimonic* with the dead. In philosophical circles more elaborate *daimonologies* had emerged and were emerging in which the *daimonic* spirits were intermediate beings. However, it is clear that at the more popular level, as represented by the magical world, *daimons* were persistently identified with ghosts, and that this also protrudes into the literary sources, both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish. The involvement of ghosts in exorcisms is also attested in spells from Ancient Egypt, Ancient Babylon and Assyria, and in the second century Greek writers Lucian (*Philops.* 16)[52] and Philostratus (*VitAp.* 3.38; 4.20). Later readers apparently read Gospel exorcism accounts from this point of view, despite the Fathers' objections,[53] and perhaps this would have been automatic for many of Mark's earlier readers as well. In what follows, this thesis will explore what such a reading would be like.

2.3 Unclean Spirits II

2.3.1 Unclean Souls

The clarification of the link between the *daimons* and the dead also suggests that the expression 'unclean spirits' may not have been as strange to Greco-Roman readers as at first glance, for it is similar to the Pythagorean notion of 'unclean souls'.[54] Clearly

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51 The *daimonic* powers of the dead worked on the side of justice (*BJ* 1.82, 84; *AJ* 13.314, 317, 415–416, etc.), as vengeful ghosts (*BJ* 1.599, 607, cf. *AJ* 17.1) or spirits of the blessed dead (*BJ* 6.47).

52 Smith (1965), 403–26, claims this as the first exorcism in non-Biblical Greek literature. However, a fragment of a 5th century BC mime may allude to an exorcism, Page73.

53 For example, Chrysostom, *Hom. on Matthew* 28, 3; *2Hom. on Lazarus* 6.235, 6. The critique of the *daimon*/ghost connection is at least as early as Tatian (*Or.* 16.1, referring to a lost work). Brown, 32, summarises: 'Where the teachings of the Fathers of the Church clash with popular belief, it is invariably in the direction of denying the *human* links involved in sorcery (they will deny, for instance, that it is the souls of the dead that are the agents of misfortune), ...'.

54 This helps to bridge the gap between the NT use of πνεῦμα and the Greek use of δαίμων identified by Brenk, 2115. Cf. Schweizer, 336: 'By virtue of its related character as the breath or principle of life πνεῦμα is largely coterminous with ψυχή, and hence can easily be used in place of it.' *Suda s.v.*: πνεῦμα· ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Arr. *Epict.Diss.* 3.13.14f.

Pythagoras and those following him believed that a living man could possess either a 'pure', or an 'unclean' soul (Pl. *Leg*. 716e; Plut. *De lib.educ.* 12F, on Pythagoras), but what is of interest here is the fate of such souls in the afterlife.[55]

After the souls leave their body, Pythagoras held that,

> the pure are led into the upper-most region, but the impure are not permitted to approach the pure or each other, but are bound by the Furies in bonds unbreakable. The whole air is full of souls[56] which are called *daimons* or heroes ...
>
> (D.L. 8.31)

These 'Pythagorean' notions evidently influenced authors such as Plato and Plutarch.

According to the *Phaedo*, at generation each soul receives a personal *daimon* as a guide. Whereas the 'orderly and wise soul' follows it,[57]

> the soul that is desirous of the body [...] flits about it, and in the visible world for a long time, and after much resistance and many sufferings is led away with violence and with difficulty by its appointed genius.
>
> (108A–B)

> And when it arrives at the place where the other souls are, the soul which is impure and has done wrong (τὴν μὲν ἀκάθαρτον καί τι πεποιηκυῖαν τοιοῦτον) [...] is avoided and shunned by all, and no one is willing to be its companion or its guide, but it wanders about alone in utter bewilderment, during certain fixed times, after which it is carried by necessity to its fitting habitation.
>
> But the soul that has passed through life in purity and moderation (ἡ δὲ καθαρῶς τε καὶ μετρίως τὸν βίον διεξελθοῦσα), finding gods for companions and guides, goes to dwell in its proper dwelling.[58]
>
> (Pl. *Phd*. 108B–C)

In describing the various portions of the earth, Socrates then mentions the Acherusian lake where souls of most of the dead must await before being sent back into bodies (113A),[59] undergoing purification (καθαιρόμενοι, 113D) and paying the

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55 Contrast Philo, who certainly has the notion of the impure soul amongst the living (*Leg*. 3.8; *Det.* 103; *Deus*. 8; *Fug*. 81; *Migr*. 69; *Spec*. 209), but has no role for it in the afterlife and may even exclude the possibility (cf. *Spec*. 3.207).

56 Cf. Philo *Gig*. 7–8.

57 Cf. Philo *Deus*. 128.

58 Cf. Pl. *Resp*. 517B.

penalty for any wrong done and rewarded for any good. But not all of the dead end up on these shores:

> Those who are found to have excelled in holy living are freed from these regions within the earth and are released as from prisons; mounting upward into their pure abode (ἄνω δὲ εἰς τὴν καθαρὰν οἴκησιν ἀφικνούμενοι) and dwelling upon the earth. And of these, all who have duly purified themselves by philosophy live henceforth altogether without bodies, and pass to still more beautiful abodes.
>
> (114B–C)

Plutarch's eschatological myth in *De sera numinis vindicta* echoes the same ideas. Immediately on death, some souls flit aloft (564A–B) and dwell 'above in the purity' (ἄνωθεν ἐν τῷ καθαρῷ, 564B), not requiring purgation. Those punished in the body by swift Poinê are dealt with comparatively gently, for she passes over 'many things requiring purgation' (πολλὰ τῶν καθαρμοῦ δεομένων, 564F), but those souls who come into the afterlife 'unpunished and unpurged' (ἀκόλαστος καὶ ἀκάθαρτος, 565A) begin to be tortured by Dikê's purification process which painfully removes each of the passions. The 'end of purgation and punishment' (καθαρμοῦ καὶ κολάσεως πέρας, 565C) arrives when the passions are completely smoothed away, although, before this can occur, some souls are carried off again into bodies (565E) because of their continued desire for the things of the passions (cf. 565F–566A, 567F).

Thus, according to the Pythagorean model, the pure souls return to their origin at death, becoming completely separate from the body 'wholly pure, even fleshless and sacred' (καθαρὸν παντάπασι καὶ ἄσαρκον καὶ ἁγνόν, Plut. *Rom.* 28.7).[60] On the other hand, the 'unclean spirits' would be the souls who require purgation, i.e. those still 'desirous of the body' (cf. Pl. *Phd.* 108A), passion-ridden (Plut. *De sera* 565B), and longing for the pleasures of the body (566A). These continue to hover in the air around the realm of the body. It is these 'unclean souls' who are manifested as ghosts.

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59 The relative state of uncleanness of soul also determines the reincarnated lot. In the *Timaeus*, Plato explains the water-dwelling creatures as the lowest forms of reincarnated men, 'seeing that they were unclean of soul through utter wickedness' (92b; cf. *Phd.* 81E–82A).

60 Cf. the πνεῦμα doing the same: Dem. *Or.* 60.24; *Epict.Diss.* 2.1.17; Epig.Gr. 250,6; 613,6.

> Such a soul is weighed down by this [desire for the body] and is dragged back into the visible world, through fear of the invisible and of the other world, and so, as they say, it flits about the monuments and the tombs, where shadowy shapes of souls (ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα) have been seen, figures of those souls which were not set free in purity but retain something of the visible; and this is why they are seen.
>
> (Pl. *Phd.* 81C–D)

It is difficult to say how pervasive these ideas were in Mark's world, although from the 1st century BC Neopythagoreanism was in the ascendancy, with a school centred in Rome, and would continue until it merged into Neoplatonism, influencing people such as Nigidius Figulus (1st BC), Philo (1st BC/1st AD), Apollonius of Tyana (d. *ca.* AD 96–98), and, later, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Porphyry, and Plotinus. For any of Mark's Greco-Roman readers with a Pythagorean legacy, the expression 'unclean spirit' would connote a soul still unpurged of the body, which prefers to flit about where bodies still remain and which could manifest itself as a ghost. This is virtually equivalent to the notion that *daimons* are the souls of those who had already died.

2.3.2 Interfering Unclean Ghosts

Although the reference to 'unclean spirits' in the medieval scholia on Demosthenes and Aeschines[61] may reflect Christian colouring, it provides indirect support for the view argued here. These scholia explain that the public assembly of Athens was cleansed through the sacrifice of a pig, because formerly the assembly had been disturbed by 'unclean *daimons* and spirits'. The coupling of the two beings is interesting in itself, but also, since the pig was a chthonic sacrifice, this sacrifice indicates that they were from the underworld. Although this does not require them to be departed souls, it is consistent with them being so.

Some extant sacred laws indicate that such sacrifices may have been thought to purify departed ancestors now in the underworld. The two-staged rituals reflected in *LSSupp***115** and the Lex sacra from Selinous, firstly purify the ancestor spirits, the *Tritopatores*, before making an offering to the purified (through the first rite) spirits.

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61 *Schol.Aeschin.* in or. 1.23; *Schol.Dem.* in or. 4.1b.

'The impure *Tritopatores* would appear to be the more abnormal and even dangerous figures,'[62] akin to other vengeful spirits of the dead, *alastores* and the like.

Is this the kind of 'unclean spirit' in which the man in Capernaum was existing?

2.3.3 A Man in Unclean Spirit

Although there is nothing in the account itself which specifically labels the 'unclean spirits' as ghosts, the links with the world of magic suggest this identification. Greco-Roman readers would have no problem recognising this man as a victim of a *daimonic* attack. If the Pythagorean notion of unclean souls was also part of their repertoire, this would create a closer verbal link between Mark and their conception of the *daimons*. On this understanding, the Capernaum story would be read as Jesus being confronted by departed spirits and demonstrating his authority over them (v.27).

2.4 Jesus' Authority

2.4.1 Daimonic Fear (v.24b)

The magician attempted to gain control of the spirits by manipulating them with his knowledge of the higher powers who represented a threat for the spirits (cf. Lucian *Philops*. 16; Philostr. *Vit.Ap.* 3.38). The assumption of *daimonic* fear which was so characteristic of magic is a very ancient belief, being found in an Orphic hymn which calls Zeus, 'he whom *daimons* dread, and whom the throng of gods do fear' (δαίμονες ὅν φρίσσουσι[ν], θεῶν δὲ δέδοικεν ὅμιλος) (in Clem.A. *Strom.* 5.14). The literature (eg. James 2:19; TSol 6:8; *VitAp* 3.38; 4.20), spells (eg. Thompson"**N**".30; *PHarris* 55[63] [1st/ 2nd AD]; PGM IV.3014ff.; XII.50ff., 117f.; LXXVII.5ff.; XXXVI.256–64 = Gager**130**; Sepher ha-Razim 2.40ff.; Isbell**8**.6–7, 8, 11; **43**.4; **55**.9; **54**.7) and curses (eg. Gager**28**; **27** = PGM IV.296–466) attest to the *daimons*' fear and to it being used against them.[64]

Sometimes the *daimon* is manipulated by a promise of a gift (Fox = Gager**134**), or an offering of some kind (εὐαγγέλια θύσω, DTA**109**), or of being left alone (ἐὰν

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62 Jameson et al, 72.

63 Powell. Cf. Gager**126**, where Israel's God is 'seated on the mountain of violence'.

64 For other instances, see Wortmann, 73.

τοῦτό μοι ποιήσῃς, ἀπολύσω σε, SuppMag**46**.27).[65] But the usual pattern was to threaten them, playing upon their fear, whether of being harmed (cf. the Augustan SuppMag**72** threatens the underworld gods with an intractable headache until the magician's purposes are fulfilled),[66] or tortured (Mk 5:7), or sent lower down in the underworld (cf. Plut. *Dion* 2; see discussion on Suppliant#6, below), or, as in Capernaum, of being destroyed (eg. PGM IV.1247f.).

There was always the possibility that the magician's threats would backfire (cf. Acts 19:13–16),[67] but, in Capernaum, this does not happen. The *daimons*' perception of Jesus as a threat is clearly the recognition of his superior authority.

2.4.2 The Muzzling (v.25)

The usual translation of φιμώθητι (v.25) 'be silent', although accurate, needs to be strengthened considerably. The verb is used for the muzzling of an animal (cf. 1Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18; cf. Dt 25:4 = Philo *Virt.* 145), which implies control of its behaviour. When silence is required, additional words are often added (cf. Mk 4:39, σιώπα), such as in a wrath restrainer (4th AD): φιμώcατε τὰ cτόματα | τὰ κατ' ἐμοῦ, 'control the mouths which are against me' (PGM XXXVI.164), or in a curse tablet (3rd AD): φιμώσατον δὲ τὰ στόματα πάντων 'muzzle the mouths of all' (DT**15**.24),[68] but the basic idea of bringing under control is not compromised. It is similar to, but probably stronger than, καταδεῖν which is very common in the magical materials.[69] Jesus commands the spirit to 'be muzzled', ie. to come under control.

This is endorsed by its use in contexts which show the magicians attempting to bring victims under control, e.g., 'muzzle, subordinate, enslave him … cause him to come under my feet (φίμωcον, | ὑπόταξον, καταδούλωcον … ποίη|cον αὐτόν, ὑπὸ

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65 See also SGD**173, 54, 109**; DTA**99**; SuppMag**45**.12–15; Gager**27, 28, 30**.

66 Unfortunately the text breaks off before these purposes are spelled out. Brashear (1979) considers that it was the cure of the magician's own headache, in which case a series of charms associated with erotic magic ends with 'Heilzauber'. Although it is not uncommon to have lists of unrelated spells, in this case, it appears to me that the parts of this text can all be related to erotic magic and, on analogy both with other love charms and with other Helios invocations, I would speculate that the magician's goal was the drawing of the woman.

67 Cf. the constant need for the magical spells to prescribe protective measures for the user.

68 Gager**4** ignores the verb and translates '… the stomachs [*sic*] of all'.

69 So Eitrem, 38.

τοὺς πόδας μοι ἔλθῃ, PGM 965, 966–8 [4th AD], ; cf. IX.4–7, 9). The cognate adjective appears in the Cyprus curse tablets (3rd AD): 'I bind the aforementioned close in this "muzzling" deposit (φιμωτικὸν κατάθεμα)',[70] as does the noun (DT25.14 δὸς φιμὸν τῶ θεοδώρω), and both the adjective and verb appear on a related selenite tablet.[71] The tablets clearly aim to silence opponents at law,[72] but the related request that someone 'remain subject' the rest of their life may indicate that the silencing is also a sub-set of a bigger concept.

The rendering 'come under control' conveys an element of relationship that 'be silent' does not. Instead of simply being a command, this suggests that the spirit ought properly to be under the control of Jesus. Once again, in this relationship Jesus clearly has the upper hand.

2.4.3 The Expulsion

Jesus' command (ἔξελθε) implies that he is dealing with a case of 'possession'. This needs to be asserted against the previous tendency of exegetes to explain away *daimonisation* by reference to epilepsy or madness.[73] The first century Greco-Roman world in which Mark was written knew of both these conditions and the vocabulary associated with them is not used here. Mark's story opens with an account of an exorcism of a possessed person, not the cure of an epileptic, or a madman. Rather than reducing the account by way of a more manageable medical diagnosis, given its important position as the first of Mark's miracles, it is better to ask how this account functions in the narrative when it is read exactly as it is portrayed, ie. as an exorcism.

Even on Palestinian soil, the number of demonstrable cases of exorcism should not be exaggerated,[74] still less the notion of 'possession' amongst the Greeks. Since the

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70 DT28; trans.: Jordan (1994b), 133. Cf. PGM VII.396; XLVI.4, 8.

71 Jordan (1994b), 136, 140.

72 They ask for the victim's voice to be taken that they might become ἄφωνοι. Similarly, a red jasper from Afghanistan 'muzzles so-and-so' Jordan (1994a), 124 n.23 — the verb is φιμόω (D.R. Jordan, *per Litt.* 30/11/95). Isbell61 muzzles someone in an anti-magical attack.

73 Cf. Brenk, 2108. Robinson, 93, complained of the tendency to reduce the exorcisms to healings.

74 Cf. 'exorcism was a common form of therapy in the ancient world', Meyer (1983), 34; 'Exorcism is one of the most ancient and universal practices in the history of humankind. In

first extra-Biblical Greek exorcism of someone 'possessed' is found in Lucian (*Philops.* 16; [2nd AD]), it is difficult to say whether this would be a familiar concept to the Greco-Roman readers at all.[75] However, whether or not 'possession' was a familiar term, expulsion of a *daimonic* influence was certainly known. Plutarch spoke of the μάγοι (probably meaning Persian specialists)[76] advising the *daimonised* (τοὺς δαιμονιζομένους) to recite the Ephesia Grammatta (*Quaest.conv.* 706E). As well as in later charms (eg. 3rd AD, PGM VII.215–18), these famous letters appear in spells much older than the New Testament.[77] They were used to avert evil, often in contexts suggestive of magic.[78] If so, then, by definition, they were also averting *daimonic* attacks.

The magical material contains spells which seek to avert *daimonic* attacks from a person. A malicious Latin tablet from Julius Caesar's time is a counter-curse (Fox = Gager**134**), as is a silver tablet, probably from the first century, which sought to turn away a curse — ὑπόθεσις, perhaps a reference to a curse tablet being deposited against her — and protect from poison (Gager**120**). Its location in a grave suggests that the

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first century Palestine it was widely practiced [*sic*]...' Rousseau and Arav, 88, cf. 90. Twelftree (1993), 13–52, has a more sober assessment of the evidence.

75 Smith (1965) argues that it was not Greek at all, for Gods and *daimons* were thought to influence people by external means; cf. Brenk, 2108. Although his argument has not gone without criticism, it is fairly persuasive. The fragment of Sophron's mime (Page**73**) is not necessarily an exorcism of Hecate, and it contains no hint of 'possession'; in Tobit, Sarah is not possessed by Asmodeus, so this is not an exorcism proper. [Arist.] *Mir.Ausc.* 166 mentions a stone from the Nile used 'τοῖς δαίμονί τινι γενομένοις κατόχοις, but the sayings in this collection were probably compiled from the 2nd to 6th AD, although the knowledge may be earlier. The ruse of Nicias (*ca.* 214–211 BC; Plut. *Marc.* 20.5–6), certainly suggests that he had seen someone 'possessed' (by gods), in order to be able to do such a good job of its imitation. Cf. Hipp. *De morb.sac.* 4: 'When at night occur fears and terrors, delirium, jumpings from the bed and rushings out of doors, they say that Hecate is attacking or that heroes are assaulting.'

76 Cf. Pliny *HN* 30.2; Nock; Smith (1984), 306.

77 Note, for example, in the unpublished lead tablet from Phalasarna (4th/3rd BC), and a similar older one in the Getty Museum Jordan (1992). Audollent, App. VII lists Ephesia Grammatta in his collection of curse tablets, although including more than the classic six words. For a brief discussion and literature, see Jordan (1988a), 257; Arnold, 15f.

78 They were used to gain victory in a wrestling contest (Suda, *s.v.*; Eustathius, *Comm. ad. Hom.* 19.247), in which they could have been a counter-charm. Menander, *Paidion* 371, reports them as 'evil-averting spells' for those getting married, i.e. counter-charms against separation magic? Anaxilis, 'The Harp-maker' (mid 4th BC) refers to 'wearing Ephesian charms in little sewed bags', as quoted by Athen. *Deipn.* 12.548c, which sounds like amulets against *daimonic* attacks.

conjurer was enlisting the dead, to protect against the dead (Cf. PGM I.195–222; IV.86–87; 1227–64; 3007–86; V.96–172; VII.579–90; XII.270–350; XCIV.17–21; GMPT CXIV.1–14).

The expulsion of the spirit by Jesus was the definitive demonstration of his authority. If he did not have the superior power, then he would not gain control of the *daimons* in this way (contrast Acts 19:13–16). The cry from the *daimon* suggests that they did not go willingly, but they went nevertheless.[79]

2.5 The Spirits' Response

2.5.1 Daimonic Knowledge

The spirits claim to know who Jesus is (v.24c), and, compared to what the readers already know from the narrative's reliable commentary, there is no reason to question the truth of their identification. 'Mark's audience would recognize that this unclean spirit has everything to lose by a false identification, which would insure a failure of the defensive maneuver [*sic*].'[80] Their claim to know Jesus represents an attempt to gain the upper hand and so control him.

In magical manipulation of the underworld beings, it was essential to be well connected with those in power. Although it was perfectly acceptable to make use of the spirit of an unknown corpse, the magician needed to know the names of the powers to invoke so that that corpse could be released to his service. Although, having said as much, care was also taken that it was *only* the spirit of *this* corpse that was released (cf. PGM IV.369f. ἔγειρον μόνον σεαυτόν), for an unsummoned spirit could be a dangerous spirit. Thus, even the summoning of the anonymous *nekydaimon*, was the summoning of a *particular* spirit, namely, the one associated with *this* corpse. But, in order to manipulate the higher powers, it was necessary to know the names. The long lists of names appearing in the various spells suggest that these invocations used as many names as possible (cf. Lucian *Philops.* 17) to enhance the chances of hitting on

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79 Ghosts cry out (e.g. Scurlock **Presc77**.14; Thompson**XV**.10; "**K**".30; "**C**".I.50ff. 'Behind me [howl] not, shriek not!'), and magicians respond in kind, cf. Lucian *Men.* 9.

80 Gundry, 76.

the correct spirit for the occasion.[81] A later bowl text shows the user attempting to get around the need to know them (N–SBowl 5) by ordering the *daimons* to work, 'whether I know his name or not', and then bluffing that if he does not know the name, it was explained to him at creation or disclosed in the deed of divorce of Joshua ben Perahya (cf. Montgomery8 and 17).

This structure is reversed in the Capernaum story. Rather than Jesus attempting to gain control of the spirits in order to cast them out, it is the *daimons* who claim to know something about Jesus in an attempt to gain mastery over him. When the spirit says 'I know', at this point a Hellenistic audience would think that the unclean spirit had gained the upper hand and was about to adjure Jesus (cf. 5:7). Yet despite the attempt, Jesus demonstrated his authority by gaining control (v.25).

2.5.2 The Violence

In Capernaum, as a parting gesture, the spirit violently attacked this man. Given the violence of the verb σπαράσσω (v.26), which was used to mean 'tear apart, mangle', the customary translation 'convulse' sounds a little tame.[82] The sense of violence is heightened by the spirits' great cry as they depart.

A changed voice is often attested for people under the influence of a spiritual presence. Nicias (*ca.* 214–211 BC) adopted it as part of his ruse that the Sicilian 'mothers' were afflicting him (Plut. *Marc.* 20.5–6), and it was a feature of the exorcisms associated with Apollonius of Tyana (*Vit.Ap.* 3.38; 4.20), although here the cry is 'a loud voice' (cf. PGM XIII.242–44).[83] Both features are present in Plutarch's account of the Pythia who died as a result of being forced to prophesy despite bad omens (*De defectu* 438B). Her first responses were with an unusual 'harshness of

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81 Thompson 2.xxviii comments on this phenomenon in the Assyrio-Babylonian spells, and the long lists of names in Greek magic suggests the same practice. Multiple names are also found in what is probably the oldest extant exorcistic spell (BMPap. 10685C, c. 1250–1100 B.C.; Egyptian), cf. Twelftree (1985), 22.

82 LSJ lists only Mark for this meaning. In the medical writings it is used for dry retching (Hipp. *Coa Praes.* 546), or provoking sickness (Gal. 11.57). Luke lessens the violence of the scene by changing the phrase to ῥίπτω ... εἰς τὸ μέσον. Cranfield, 79, asks whether Matthew's omission of the entire story was due to this very detail which would have been 'distasteful'; cf. his omission of Mk 7:31–37, 8:22–26.

83 Sometimes the magician must respond in kind, commanding the *daimons* ' in a loud voice', cf. PGM XII.160–178.

voice', which indicated she 'was filled with a mighty and baleful spirit' (ἀλάλου καὶ κακοῦ πνεύματος οὖσα πλήρης). After finally becoming hysterical, with a frightful shriek (μετὰ κραυγῆς ἀσήμου καὶ φοβερᾶς) she rushed out and threw herself down and died a few days later.

Although all *daimonic* attacks may not be necessarily violent, this does seem to have been one of their features.[84] The actions of *daimons* seem to be violent[85] and bent on death,[86] such as the ghost possessing the boy who would not come to see Apollonius, and threatened his mother 'with steep places and precipices and declared that he would kill her son' (Philostr. *VitAp* 3.38; cf. Mk 9:22). Other ghosts were just as violent, such as that at Temesa (Paus.6.6.8–11). One of Odysseus' sailors had raped a girl in Temesa and was stoned to death. Odysseus sailed on, 'but the ghost (δαίμων) of the stoned man never ceased killing without distinction the people of Temesa, attacking both old and young' until they propitiated him with a temple and the yearly gift of the fairest maiden in Temesa as a wife. Another ghost was the Hero Eunostos, at Tangara, who, having been killed by the machinations of a woman, would not tolerate any women to come near to his grave (Plut. *QuaestGr* #40, 300D; cf. #27, 297C; #28, 297D; Hdt. 5.67; see also Paus. 9.19.38.3–6).

The violence of the *daimonic* is hideously portrayed in the counter-curse, mentioned above, which wishes the utmost torture and pain on the person who has previously cursed this client, before their eventual death.[87]

> Good and beautiful Proserpina (or Salvia, shouldst thou prefer), mayest thou wrest away the health, body, complexion, strength, and faculties of Plotius and consign him to thy husband, Pluto. Grant that by his own devices he may not escape this penalty. Mayest thou consign him to the quartan, tertian, and daily fevers to war and wrestle with him until they snatch away his very life. Wherefore, I hand over this victim to thee, Proserpina (or, shouldst thou prefer, Acherusia). Mayest thou summon

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84 So much so that Hull, 81 n.29, has to apologise for its absence in Mk 7:31–37, which he regards as a case of *daimonic* illness.

85 ThompsonV.iv.34; V.v.44 'knowing neither mercy nor pity'; "T".10 'they tear out the heart'; "X" 'against the man angrily'; "Y" 'the have gone from the grave, angrily they come' (cf. PsPhoc 100f.)

86 Robinson, 87–88.

87 Although addressed to Proserpine, the agent of torture would no doubt be the *daimons* released to do her bidding.

> for me the three-headed hound Cerberus to tear out the heart of Plotius, ...
>
> Proserpina Salvia, I give thee the head of Plotius, the slave of Avonia, his brow and eyebrows, eyelids and pupils. I give thee his ears, nose, nostrils, tongue, lips, and teeth, so he may not speak his pain; his neck, shoulders, arms, and fingers, so he may not aid himself; his breast, liver, heart, and lungs, so he may not locate his pain; his bowels, belly, navel, and flanks, so he may not sleep the sleep of health; *his shoulder-blades, so that he may not be able to sleep well; his sacred part, so that he may not be able to make water; his buttocks, vent,* thighs, knees, legs, shanks, feet, ankles, heels, toes, and toe-nails, so he may not stand of his own strength. ...
>
> May he most miserably perish and depart this life. Mayest thou so irrevocably damn him that his eyes may never see the light of another month.[88]
>
> (Fox = Gager**134**)

Similarly, erotic magic, which is one of the best attested kinds and is demonstrably earlier than the 1st century AD (cf. PMonGr inv. 216 [1st BC]; SuppMag**72**,[89] [Augustan]), contains some particularly sordid examples of the violence of ghosts, which is what the conjurer uses against the victim. These spells frequently make use of the agency of a corpse-*daimon* to draw the intended lover to the client, using physical,[90] emotional, and 'social'[91] violence.

The frequent provision in the magical recipes of protective measures for the user of the spells also testifies to the *daimonic* violence. Evidently, the practitioner himself was not immune from assault as he conjured the spirits, especially if he accidentally summoned one they could not control (cf. PGM IV.369f.; Acts 19:13–16). If, as the curse tablets show, the ghosts were set free in order to fulfil curses which included severe bodily harm and a very painful death, then protection from such beings would be essential.

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88 Fox, 206f. = L&R II.**179** = CIL I.2520; = Gager **134**. *...* from L&R; omitted by Fox.

89 See n.66 above.

90 Love magic of all kinds was associated with death; cf. the male-directed aphrodisiacs that also tended to kill the intended, see Faraone (1992); Faraone (1994).

91 They often entailed the separation of the intended from spouse and family. See further, Martinez ; Winkler.

2.5.3 The Spirits' Question

The spirits' question may be due to their fear of annihilation, for, although the length of time that the *daimons* would live was debated, all were convinced that they would certainly die, because immortality belonged to the gods (Plut. *De defectu* 418E). They may have been afraid of being sent lower down in the underworld (cf. discussion on Suppliant #6, below), or of losing their influence in the upper world, which, given their propensity for the bodily realm, would be quite a punishment. Jesus could have been doing something akin to the various rituals for ridding households or communities of ghosts,[92] although, to account for the spirits' anxiety, perhaps something a little more permanent. The spirits recognise that Jesus has the authority to destroy them, but they are not sure whether he will. The readers are also led to ponder the question: has he come to destroy the ghosts of the dead?

What would this entail? Since the spirits of the dead were the agents of magic, their destruction would cut the heart out of it and impinge upon the huge influence of magic on society . All areas of life are represented in the charms and the curses. People were cursed in the name of business, or love, or success, or legal squabbles, or sport, or revenge, or because they cursed first, or merely because they were related to the wrong person. Such curses sought to damage every aspect of life: people's health, their relationships, their business, their reputation; and they often aimed to kill — but only after inflicting a great deal of suffering. In such an environment, any case of difficulty, be it sickness, or some other kind of suffering, would raise the suspicion that malevolent magic lay behind it. On the other hand, magic could also be used to protect from *daimonic* attacks, from other spells, from illness, in a desperate attempt to hang onto life and 'to ward off death' (Eur. *Supp*. 1109ff.). It is not surprising that, in the seventies AD 'there [was] no-one who does not fear to be spellbound by curse tablets' (Pliny *HN* 28.4.19). Along with the spells to counteract magic itself, there was even a charm to remove the fear of magic (PGM LXX.26–51).

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92 Cf. the festivals of Anthesteria and Genesia, Parentalia and Lemuria, as well as the rituals outlined in LSSup**115** and the Lex sacra from Selinous. In Rome the ghosts were allowed to emerge 24 Aug; 5 Oct; 8 Nov; Cumont, 71.

Alongside this fear of magic went a fear of the dead by which it operated. This is obvious not only by the presence of the various protective charms within the magical materials themselves, but also in various other features of ancient society. The widespread fear of ghosts can be variously illustrated: from the ghost-ridding festivals and sacred ceremonies,[93] from certain features of 'secular' Attic law which can be explained in terms of the fear of ghosts,[94] and perhaps from the philosophers' need to speak against δεισιδαιμονία (eg. Philo *Gig.* 16; Plut. *De superstitione*). In a magical environment, the dead could suddenly arrive in a home, inflict great harm and seek to take family members with them to the underworld. If they succeeded, there was always the fear that the victims would also join the ranks of the ghosts, for the *daimons* aimed to ensure their victims had an underworld position no better than their own (Plut. *Dion* 2; cf. Tatian *Or.* 16.1).

The hostility of ghosts to humans, whether or not those ghosts had been set upon the victim by some magician (or his client), could have many unpleasant effects on ordinary life. The *daimons*' question raises the possibility that Jesus had come to destroy these beings. This would put an end to their manipulation by magicians and the resulting evil effects, thus breaking the fear of such influences and effects under which large segments of the populace were held. The question raises the exciting possibility that Jesus was about to unlock the stranglehold of the dead on the living. This could mean a whole new approach to life.

Jesus had won this encounter, the crowds were amazed at his authority, and the readers are left with the question: has he come to destroy the spirits, along with their reign of violence and death? In the spells, the end of a ghostly attack is occasionally described as being given life (Scurlock**Prescr62**; Thompson ţ.IX.iv.208). This was exactly the experience for a man in Capernaum: he had lived under the influence of the dead, but now he had been given new life.

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93 See previous note.

94 Farnell, 89.

2.6 Imperial Deliverance?

The framework of Mark's narrative sets Jesus against the backdrop of the Roman Emperors. The imperial rhetoric proclaimed them as saviours who delivered the world from certain destruction. Some of them attempted to move beyond the rhetoric by establishing a reputation for themselves as miracle workers in a far more literal sense. Although Vespasian would later be credited with some miraculous cures (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81), amongst his Claudian predecessors, Gaius had attempted to fake some miracles,[95] and Nero devoted enormous wealth and energy in the pursuit of magic, before abandoning it, since his 'greatest wish was to command the gods' (Pliny *HN* 30.2).

But the emperors' reputations were not really honed on their ability to perform miracles. Despite the rhetoric, the critics could point to the long trail of blood left in their wake.[96] Nero may have turned to magic to learn how to command the gods and manipulate the dead, but he was remembered because 'more cruelly behaving than any did Nero thus fill our Rome with ghosts' (Pliny *HN* 30.5). The emperors would show themselves experts at creating ghosts, but they could do nothing to destroy them.

2.7 Significance in the Narrative

Jesus' encounter with this first suppliant provides a brilliant opening to Mark's story. This is not a person who is merely playing with ghosts, or who fills the land with ghosts, but one who deals with ghosts. He rescued one of their victims and in such a way as to raise the question whether this event spells the end of the tyranny of the dead over the living.[97] Which of the emperors could ever claim to have achieved such notoriety?

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95 Cf. Scherrer.

96 'After [Augustus] there had been undoubtedly peace, but peace with bloodshed' (Tacit. *Ann.* 1.10.4). Tacitus was thinking of the blood of the Roman nobility, but as a lead-in to the rest of his book, Wengst, 10 n.19, adds 'other blood will have to be recalled.'

97 Robinson, 92, correctly recognised this scene as paradigmatic for interpreting the remainder of the conflict stories in Mark.

4. Suppliant #2: A Woman with a Fever (1:29–31)

1 Text to Reader: Raised from her Bed

The narrative dynamics offer little support for the view that the main point of this encounter is 'to reveal the trust of Jesus' four followers'.[1] Although providing continuity with the calling scene and so with the ongoing movement of the narrative, this will be their first encounter with a miracle. They were apparently absent from the synagogue,[2] which means that the first suppliant's story remains information shared between readers and Jesus, giving the readers a position of privilege over the four. In contrast to the distance this places between them and the disciples, the scene closely aligns them with the suppliant.

The readers enter the scene with Jesus, coming from the synagogue (v.29), and the narrative comment immediately directs their attention to the fevered woman (v.30a).[3] The revelation of the secrets of her condition (v.30a, κατέκειτο πυρέσσουσα) focalises the readers through her, and, because this occurs even before Jesus learns of it from the disciples (v.30b), they are given a position of privilege over all the characters. It is as if they have been placed in the woman's bedroom and now await the others to join them there. This is Mark's first mention of illness. In terms of extraordinary abilities, the readers know only of Jesus' confrontation with the spirits of the dead. There is no hint of any spirits being involved in the woman's condition,[4] but as the narrator supplies this information it raises the question: if Jesus can deal with the unclean spirits, what can he do with a woman already taken to bed with fever?

When the four inform Jesus about the woman (v.30b), there is no indication that the four expected that he would (or could) do anything for her, but they probably

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1 Williams, 94; cf. 182 n.1.

2 Reading the strongly attested singulars, ἐξελθών and ἦλθεν (1:29), with e.g. Swete, Cranfield, Taylor.

3 Such explicit comments from the narrator are part of the 'stable backdrop of *direction* for the reader' essential for the rhetorical impact of a narrative; Fowler, 81; who ignores Mk 1:30a.

4 Contrast Lk 4:39.

simply mention a matter of some concern for the household. Knowing about the synagogue events, the readers — still waiting with the woman — anticipate what Jesus may do and the surprise it will be for the disciples.

The readers then watch Jesus travel to the bedside (v.31). The absence of the four creates the sense that it is only the readers and Jesus who now stand there, which promotes an intimacy between these three parties. The finite verb supplying his action does not focus upon her healing *per se* (contrast, e.g., θεραπεύω, cf. 1:34, 3:2, 10, 6:5, 13; ἰάομαι, cf. 5:29), but on the fact that 'he raised' (ἔγειρεν) her — with some emphasis upon the verb, due to it being positioned prior to its supporting participle (κρατήσας). The stark narration of the consequence conveys the sense that it was achieved with simplicity and ease (v.31b): καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός. Confirming that the cure was instantaneous and complete, the story ends with the woman, who had begun on her bed (v.30a), serving them (v.31b).

Despite all this happening, no response is reported. As the scene continues, those who had witnessed the events in the synagogue arrive, eager for more (cf. vv.22, 27f.), but the text is strangely silent about the reaction of the four when Simon's mother-in-law was raised from her bed. Since this is their first encounter with Jesus' abilities, their lack of response is deafening. When the flood of people arrive at the door after sundown, it is as if the (unresponsive) disciples are already buried in a crowd of people whose responses to Jesus are already more appropriate than theirs.

The scene does not focus upon the four disciples, but upon the encounter between Jesus and a woman with a fever. Viewing the scene from the woman's perspective, the reader learns that, despite her fever-stricken condition, Jesus raised her.

2 Reader to Text

As the first healing miracle in Mark, the woman's raising has a position of some narrative significance. However, this miracle is probably one of the least impressive for modern readers convinced of the benefits of antibiotics and paracetamol! To appreciate the impact of this story upon Mark's early readers, their perspective on fever must be

recovered. They would not regard the cure of Simon's mother-in-law as a minor matter; but as an instance of Jesus casting back the shadow of death itself.

2.1 Fever and Death

2.1.1 Fever

Although not disinterested in underlying causes, the ancients tended to regard fever more as a condition than a symptom (e.g. Philo *Sobr.* 45). She appears not as a case of 'malignant malaria, enteric or typhus' fever,[5] or of any other potential *disease*, but as a case of *fever*.

Fever was common in the ancient world. It is discussed incessantly in the Hippocratic corpus, whose master had provided many of the classifications still in use,[6] and the need to devote attention to fever had not abated for Galen (2nd AD).[7] The prevalence of fever is confirmed by turning from the writings of the physicians, to the materials of the magical practitioners, who were also called upon to deal with fevers.

Although mild cases obviously occurred, it must be stressed for the benefit of those who live under the regime of post-war modern medicine that fever was an extremely severe condition. It struck suddenly (Thompson"**O**".5: 'Fever, the evil disease which none can see '), taking an individual out of action (e.g. Thuc. 2.49; Joseph. *Vit.* 48); it was no respecter of person, gender or age. Its severity was well-known: 'an attack of fever is a disease not of a part but of the whole body' (Philo *Sobr.* 45);[8] being likened to torture on the rack and wheel (Philo *Legat* 206).[9] The second-century woman mentioned in P.Oxy 1381 would no doubt agree, having been afflicted

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5 Mastermann, 51, based on Luke's 'great fever' (4:38).

6 Weiss, 956.

7 The Hippocratic corpus has over 1200 references to πυρετός; Galen, who devoted a treatise to the subject (*De differentiis febrium libri ii*, Kuhn Vol. 7.273–405), over 2000.

8 Cf. Thuc. 2.49 the plague 'spread through the whole body'; 2.50 the violence being 'too great for human nature to endure'; and the curse tablets which sought to insert fever into all the members of the body (DT**51**; **74**; **75**).

9 Cf. the use of μεγάλας βασάνους βασανιζόμενα 'tortured with great tortures' as a reference to fever in DT**1**; Versnel (1994), esp. 150 and Versnel (1991), 73.

for three years by a recurrent fever; as would her son, who, after being cured by Asklepios of the same sickness, provided a first-hand account of the distress:

> It was night when every living thing except those in pain is asleep [...]. An exceedingly hot fever burned me and I was convulsed with pain in my side because of constant coughing and choking. Groggy from suffering, I was lying there half-asleep and half-awake, being tended by my mother as if I were still a baby for she is by nature affectionate. She was sitting [by my bed] extremely grieved at my agony and not able to get even a little sleep [...].
>
> (P.Oxy 1381)

The distress here is both echoed and overshadowed by the Hippocratic case studies, which provide detailed evidence of just how dreadful it was to suffer 'fever' in an age without effective options for intervention. The distress of the illness would be compounded by the extra suffering caused by relatives and neighbours, for diseased people were often isolated,[10] and, for conditions suspected of being contagious, sufferers were often left to care for themselves. Even doctors felt no obligation to stay with their patients if they were at risk.[11]

2.1.2 The Fear of Fever

Given the prevalence and severity of the condition, it is not surprising to find indications that fever was feared, especially from the variety of protective measures resorted to, whether the physicians, for whom fever formed a large part of the case loads; or the gods, such as Asklepios (P.Oxy 1381), or specialist fever gods;[12] or the magicians. Many Greek charms against fever have survived,[13] as well as a few

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10 Strubbe, 44. This is frequently attested: Versnel (1985), 254 with bibliography and Hasenfratz, for other cultures esp. 14–24, 33–34, 38–41. Cf. Hipp. *Epid.* III. cases 8 & 12; cf. Mk 6:56; III.17 case 7; III. case 2; case 3; I.cases 6 &14; III.case 5; III.17.case 1; case 2; III.17, case 8; III.17, case 15; I.case 10; I.case 13.

11 Galen himself fled from the Roman epidemic. For further discussion, see Stark, 168, although some physicians during the Athenian plague stayed until they died (Thuc. 2.47, 51).

12 Dunst. Febris also appears in Sen. *Apoc.* 6.

13 A representative sample: Fever amulets: 3rd AD: PGM VII.211–12, 213f., 18–21; XXXIII.1–25; SuppMag**2, 3, 4, 79**; PTeb 275; 3rd/4th AD: GMPT LXXXVIII.1–19; SuppMag**9, 10, 11**; 4th AD: PGM P5a (Christian); SuppMag**2**.10–14 (lead tablet), **12**; GMPT LXXXIX.1–27; 4/5th AD: PGM XVIIIb.1–7; SuppMag**19, 21, 22, 29**; P.Amst 173 I (Christian); 5th AD: PGM XLIII.1–27; PGM P5b (Christian); SuppMag**23, 25**; 5/6th AD: SuppMag**31**; 6th AD: SuppMag**35** (Christian; refers to the healing of Peter's mother in law); 7th AD: SuppMag**34**.

inscribed gems.[14] Although most of the Greek spells are later than the New Testament period, it is safer to assume that this is a problem of survival, than that earlier spells did not exist. Both the Philinna Papyrus (PGM XX [2nd/1st BC]) and the Augustan SuppMag**72** contain charms against headache, which shows that 'medical' magic was operative. This makes it rather difficult to believe that it was not used against such a common condition as fever. Since curse tablets used fever as one of their weapons against the enemy (see below), it is likely that there were magical counter-charms against such attacks. In any case, the Semitic materials demonstrate that magical protections against fever were certainly known in that context well before the first century.[15]

The use of such protective measures reveals that fever was not only undesirable, it was deeply feared. This fear is partly accounted for by the prevalence and severity of fever, and its sudden, mysterious nature. But the main reason for fearing fever was that it was a killer.

2.1.3 Fever the Killer

Fever was a well-known killer (Thompson**XI**.3 fever is 'against his life'; **XII**.40 'it slayeth him'). Malaria was a major cause of fever, and, although not an infectious disease,[16] it took its share of victims.[17] Infectious disease proper — which would also be 'fever' — 'was undoubtedly the single greatest threat to life in antiquity, with epidemics killing half or more of the populations of the world's larger cities.' Ancient physicians knew that the acute diseases, almost certainly accompanied by fever, 'kill the great majority of patients' (Cf. Hipp. *Reg.Ac.Dis.* 5).

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14 Besides his own, Geissen cites only Bonner**111**. The 2nd/3rd AD gem against 'inflammation' of the uvula, Daniel and Maltomini (1989) could also be added, since it has the same grape-formation found in other fever amulets.

15 See the materials in Thompson's volumes; e.g. 1.**III**.40, 117, 155, 163; "**K**".169 headache, shivering, heartache; 286 'burneth [like] fire'; "**C**".ii.100 'noisesome fever'; "**J**".5: 'The evil Spirit and Fever of the Desert; O Pestilence that has touched the man for harm'; cf. "**C**", 156, 173. The Ašakki marṣûti series has at least 12 tablets against fever.

16 Cf. Ps.Arist, *Prob.* 7.8.

17 The Hippocratic corpus show that cases of malarial fever died; 1/3 of the 'fever' related deaths in Rogers' study were due to malaria, Rogers, 200.

The close association between fever and death is confirmed by non-medical sources, as far back as the Epic of Gilgamesh, which contrasts Enkidu's fate with two normal means of death: 'Fever did not seize him; On the battle field of men he did not fall; the netherworld seized him' (Tab. XII.51f.; ANET, 98). In the late first century, reflecting on the fear of death, Epictetus asks

> What do the swords of the tyrants do? They kill. And what does fever do? Nothing else (πυρετὸς δὲ τί ποιεῖ; ἄλλο οὐδέν).
>
> (Arr. *Epict.Diss.* 4.7.26, cf. 27)

Here the ability of fever to kill is proverbial, and, if the reality behind the rhetoric can be discerned, 'nothing else' implies that it exercised this ability extremely commonly, if not almost automatically. Lucian also hints at the frequency of death from fever, when Peregrinus is smitten 'by a very violent fever' before attempting his own apotheosis by burning himself alive. When his physician told him that it may not be necessary, since 'Death had come to his door spontaneously', he replied 'but that way would not be so notable, being common to all' (*Pereg* 44).

This bringer of death, so 'common to all', had contributed to the deaths of several of the 'great ones' of human society: Alexander the Great; and, in Palestine, Alexander Janneus (*BJ* 1.106; 78 BC) and Herod the Great (*BJ* 1.656 [4 BC]).[18] The ability of fever to kill 'the great' would add extra 'glory' to its public reputation as a killer, as would the memory of times when it devastated populations, such as the great plague of Athens (Thuc. 2.47–52 [430 BC]).[19] Such epidemics would burn themselves into the collective memory, and increase the fear of this 'disease', which had rightly earned its reputation as a killer.

But the home was the context in which the devastation of fever-related death would be felt most severely. Within a matter of days, fever could remove father or mother whose deaths would obviously have many ongoing social consequences. The

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18 In AD 79 it would also take Vespasian (Dio 66.17).

19 'Galen's plague' (AD 165–180) and the outbreak of measles in AD 251, provide useful comparative data, Stark, 162.

children of a home were even more likely to die than either of the parents, since they are less able to withstand high temperatures.[20]

Like the illness itself, fear of fever was both prevalent and chronic, for whenever a fever entered the house, it brought with it the potential death of parents, or children, or perhaps even the whole community.

2.1.4 The Perception of the Killer

It is also highly likely that the fear was exacerbated by the *perception* of fever as a cause of death being even greater than the reality. To illustrate from turn-of-the-century India, Rogers[21] investigated the claim that 90% of deaths in India were fever-caused. On his own analysis, fever accounted for 2/3 of the deaths in a high fever area, but 'the ignorant villagers' reported fever as the cause of almost all deaths. The fact that fever so often led to death, clearly engendered such fear that they equated the two so as to inflate the reports. It is not unreasonable that the same would be true for the first-century Greco-Roman world. Not only was fever a killer, but, in terms of public perception, its reputation probably even surpassed the reality.

2.1.5 Fever: The Shadow of Death

With the onset of fever, the patient's life would hang in the balance for several days. Philo incidentally reveals the Hippocratic wisdom that the seventh day was the decider between life and death:

> Severe bodily sicknesses too, especially persistent attacks of fever due to internal disorder, generally reach the crisis on the seventh day; for this day decides the struggle for life, bringing to some recovery, to others death.
>
> (Philo *Opif.* 125)

Although presenting a rather more complicated picture, the Hippocratic material attests to the kind of diagnostic procedures referred to here, in which a crisis was awaited to indicate whether the patient would live or die. If Philo is referring to generally circulated popular wisdom, then the expectation of potential death would be

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20 In Rogers' study, for example, 3/4 of the malaria deaths were in infants less than 1.5 years old. The odds were against the ancient child as well, Wiedemann, 11–17.

21 Rogers, 200.

built into a case of fever and the person's life would be in the balance for at least the first seven days. Since 'the crisis' could be the moment when recovery began, if it did not come after seven days, this popular wisdom was even likely to increase the fear of death thereafter.[22]

Additional assistance in predicting the outcome may be sought by some magical means, such as a 'prognostic of life and death' like Demokritos' "sphere". This consisted of numbers on two registers and was used as follows:

> Find out what day of the month the sick one took to bed. Add his name from birth to the day of the month and divide by thirty. Look up on the "sphere" the quotient: if the number is on the upper register, the person will live, but if it is on the lower register, he will die.
>
> (PGM XII.351–64)

Notice the significance of the day the patient 'takes to bed', apparently also important in the Hippocratic case studies (cf. *Epid.* III case 4; III.17 cases 2, 3, 16). Several curse tablets seek to place the person on their bed (DT**155a**; N-SG**enizah6**=Gager**113**; SGD**163**[23]). Once someone had taken to bed, it was a very real possibility that they succumb completely to the 'incurable fevers' (cf. TSol 18:23) before which the physicians recognised their helplessness. The question becomes focused upon the outcome: will they, or will they not die?

2.2 Fever and the dead?

Adding to the fear of fever would be the awareness that fever could be inflicted by magical curses.

2.2.1 Fever as Curse

One the oldest surviving *defixiones* may seek to inflict fever, since it uses the term πυριν (SGD**111** [*ca* 500 BC]).[24] An extremely fragmentary tablet from the first

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22 The actual case histories further complicate the matter: of the 16 patients who recovered, the 'crisis' was reached on days 3, 5, 6, 11 (2x), 17, 20, 24, 27, 34, 40 (3x), 80 (2x), 120; only three (18.7%) had begun to recover during the first week; twice as many recovered after 40 days.

23 ἐξορκίζω ὑμᾶς χαρακτῆρα[ς κατα]κλῖνε (for ναι) ἐπὶ κάκωσιν καὶ ἀε[ικίαν], 'I adjure you Character to put to bed NN with? ill- and outrageous treatment' (near Hebron [3rd AD]).

24 Versnel (1994), 148 (n.16, mistakenly as **108**). Cf. SGD, 192f.

century (DT**246**) includes, presumably as part of its curses, ῥυγοπύ[ρετος]. Two Attic defixiones (2nd AD) use the same formula to call upon the underworld powers to inflict someone 'with both shuddering and each day daily fever', before cursing the various members of his/her body (DT**74**; **75A**). Similarly, another asks them to

> Insert grievous fevers into all the members (ἐνβάλλετε πυρετοὺς χαλε[ποὺς εἰς] πάντα τὰ μέλη) of Gameltês, the daughter of Hugia Makrobios. Burn, O Chthonic ones (κατακαίνετε, καταχθόνι[οί]), I both the soul and the heart of Gametês, ...
>
> (DT**51** [unspecified date])

And a Latin curse against actors (c. 200 AD) uses the word *pyra*, clearly borrowing from an earlier Greek model.[25]

2.2.2 Fever as Ordeal

Other practices may have also wished fever upon people. Versnel[26] has related a group of lead tablets from the Demeter sanctuary at Knidos (2nd/1st BC), to the confession texts from Lydia and Phrygia of the 2nd/3rd AD. In these texts, a culprit is driven to confession by πεπρημένος, which, instead of the usual explanation (i.e. an Ionicising variant of πεπραμένος, 'sold'), should be taken in its normal sense of 'burning/ burnt with fever'. Although Versnel suggests that this may relate to some kind of trial by ordeal, he does not exclude the possibility that it may still refer to the 'illness', fever. Perhaps also, the 'burning' in love spells (e.g. DT**270** = Grant, 241; PGM IV.2486ff.; XVI; LXVIII) may have also been an attempt to inflict a victim with fever.[27]

2.2.3 The Fear of Fever-as-Curse

An amulet on lead (SuppMag**2** [3rd AD]) probably illustrates the attempt to ward off fever as a curse. Since πραγμάτα may refer to magical actions (PGM IV.853, cf. 776; cf. SuppMag**54**.30f.), its request for protection ἀπὸ το<ῦ> πυρετός καὶ παντὸς

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25 Versnel (1985), 269.

26 Versnel (1994), and Versnel (1991), 73, 84f.

27 For love's similarity to burning, see Meleager of Gadara (2/1 BC) *AG* 5.160.

πραγματου [= πράγματος], suggests that the charm seeks protection against harmful spells directed towards the wearer, which, in this case, included fever.

Given that fever could be wielded as a curse, it is highly likely that many of the other amulets against fever, of which so many have survived, were designed to be not only a protection against the condition, but also (especially?) against the greater designs of people who may have enlisted the condition as an instrument of their malevolent magic. Since everyone was afraid of being spellbound by curse tablets (Pliny *HN* 28.4.19), the onset of fever would have brought the additional fear that it may be the result of a curse from a rival in business or love, or an opponent at law, or another kind of enemy, perhaps even someone within the family.[28]

It is also clear that people feared the use of love charms against them. Ovid, for example, when he was unable to perform with a lover, asked:

> Has some Thessalian poison bewitched (*devota*)[29] my body, is it some spell or drug that has brought this misery upon me. Has some sorceress written (*defixit*) my name on crimson wax, and stuck a pin in my liver.
>
> (cf. Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.27–30)[30]

Part of the fear was the belief that such charms could actually kill. A charm demonstrated to Hadrian 'evoked [one] in one hour, sickened and sent [one] to bed in two hours, killed [one] in seven' (PGM 2441–62). Another warns: 'Be sure to open the door for the woman who is being led by the spell, otherwise she will die' (PGM IV.2495ff.). Given the use of sleeplessness in these charms, PGM XII.376–96 may also be a love spell leading to death (cf. ll. 378, 396). The literary sources also illustrate the knowledge that love charms could kill (cf. Ovid *Ars. Am.* 2.105–6; Plaut. *Truc.* 42–44).[31] If fever was one of the weapons wielded by these charms, then the onset of fever could indicate that someone was seeking to drag you to them for their own sexual

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28 Cf. the confession text from Asia Minor (AD 156/157), revealing that a mother-in-law was suspected of placing a curse on her son-in-law who had succumbed to a condition of 'insanity' (SEG 64.648; Gager**137**).

29 A technical term for spells on curse tablets, along with *defixio*.

30 Gager, 250, comments: 'The ease which Ovid considers this explanation suggests that the practice was well known at the time [i.e. 20 BC–1 AD].'

31 See also Faraone (1992).

pleasure, perhaps separating a person from spouse and family in the process, but certainly after inflicting all kinds of physical and mental anguish. Such fear would be all that much worse, if it was widely known that the 'fatal charm' of the *defigens* could be exactly that.

2.2.4 Fever as a Counter-curse

If the fear of fever was not enough to turn a person to magical protections, the fear of fever produced by magic was sure to be, as the potential victim attempted to secure a counter-curse,[32] which could itself wield fever as a weapon:

> snatch away the health, the body, the complexion, the strength, the faculties of Plotius. [...] Hand him over to fevers — quartan, tertian and daily — so that they wrestle and struggle with him. Let them overcome him to the point where they snatch away his life.[33]

Although not all curse tablets actually sought to kill the victim,[34] this was clearly the intention here. After invoking fever upon Plotius 'to snatch away his life', the curse concludes

> [...] so I hand over and consign Plotius to you, so that you may take care of him by the month of February. Let him perish miserably. Let him leave life miserably. Let him be destroyed miserably. Take care of him so that he may not see another month.
>
> (Fox = Gager **134** [mid 1st BC])

Fever's reputation as a killer was so firmly established that it could be enlisted to destroy an enemy. But the use of magical means to do so forges yet another link between fever and death.

2.2.5 Fever and the Dead

Since the '*daimons*' manipulated by magic were the spirits of the dead, fever could be brought to the living by the dead. In the Semitic materials, fever was clearly associated with ghosts and the underworld.[35] One of the Greek curse tablets wishing

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32 See Gager, Ch. 7 for some examples; cf. SGD, 197.

33 Gager has 'soul'.

34 It was rare in the early *defixiones*; Faraone (1991a), 8 n.38. However, this would not always be the case, as in this instance. Cf. also SGD**163** (3rd AD) βάλεται (for τε) αὐτὸν ἐπὶ κάκωσι<ν> καὶ θάν[ατον ...

35 For example, Thompson"C"ii.95ff. exorcises '... fever ... evil Ghost'.

fever upon the victim does so by calling upon the dead to fulfil this wish (καταχθόνι[οι, DT**51**). Other tablets which 'register' victims with the underworld gods (DT**74, 75**) may actually intend that these gods inflict the fever upon them through the release of a *daimon* from the underworld region.[36]

The closer the 'burning' in the love charms comes to being a real case of fever, the more clearly that fever is brought by the spirits of the dead. For the love charms patently use the spirits of the dead to bring about the distress in the 'intended'. Notice, for example, how SuppMag**54** calls upon 'the *daimons* who are in this place [i.e. the cemetery]' (l. 19: δαίμονες οἳ ἐν [τ]ούτω τῶ τόπω ἐστε), to constrain the victim; to 'hand [him] over by means of (or, 'to') the untimely dead' (l. 23: παράδοιτε ἀώροις), who were some of the most likely candidates to become ghosts. It is these '*daimons* who are roaming about in this place' (ll. 35f.: δ[αί|μον]ες οἱ ἐν τῶ τόπῶ τού[τω.] φοιτῶντες) who are called to complete the spell's transaction. From other charms it is clear that these *daimons* were to go to the victim's house, and draw her (usually) to the *defigens*. Although there is no reference to burning in this charm, its structure of operation and effects (ll.22f.) are similar to other love charms, suggesting that fever could also be wielded by these *daimons* as one of the means to fulfil their task.

Even if all the connections are not made explicit in each individual charm, because the magical *modus operandum* was well known, so too would be the perception of fever as a force for death which could be wielded by the forces of the dead. Without doubt this connection with the dead would have increased the fear of fever. When fever entered a house, not only did it threaten to take the family to the underworld, but it may have been brought by the dead in an endeavour to swell the ranks of the shades below.

2.3 Raised from the Dead?

During the Athenian plague, those who had recovered seemed to be immune from catching a fatal dose of the disease again. This experience apparently gave them a taste for immortality:

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36 This structure of operation is clear in other places, e.g. SuppMag**54**.

> They were not only congratulated (ἐμακαρίζοντο) by everybody else, but themselves, in the excess of their joy at the moment, cherished also a fond fancy with regard to the rest of their lives that they would never be carried off by any other disease.
>
> (Thuc. 2.51.6)

Noting the use of μακαρίζω, some have suggested that perhaps they were deemed to have risen from the dead and considered 'practically immortal'.[37] If so, 'fever' was such a killer that to be cured was on a par with rising from the dead!

3 The Readers and the Woman

For Mark's early readers, fever was no minor matter. Fevers were common, sudden, and extremely severe. Fear of fever drove people to a range of protective measures, perhaps especially to magic, for it was a known killer and its reputation as a killer probably even exceeded the actual facts. A fever placed people under the shadow of death and their lives hung in the balance , especially if they had already taken to bed. Because fever could be caused by magical cursing, it would be suspected that a person with a fever had come under the influence of the spirits of the dead. To have a fever was to be so close to death that to be cured could even be regarded as having come back from the dead.

For early readers, Simon's mother-in-law would be at death's door. By the time they hear of her, she had already succumbed to her bed with fever (v.30a) which would raise the prognostic question: will she ever arise? Jesus had demonstrated his ability to deal with the spirits of the dead (1:21–28), who, in a magic-ridden world, may well lie behind a fever. He dealt with her so effectively that she began to serve them. No longer under the shadow of death, she had rejoined ordinary life. Since the early readers would recognise that she had been brought back from the brink of death, Mark's description of Jesus' action seems particularly apt: 'he raised her'.

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37 Garland, 9, following Vermeule.

5. Jesus' Fame Expands (1:32–39)

The report of many more healings and exorcisms (vv.32–34) generalises what has occurred in the two scenes, so that the responses of Jesus to the possessed man in the synagogue and to Simon's mother-in-law become typical of his ministry to many.[38] Jesus' announcement that he will leave the crowds to preach elsewhere continues the narrative's sense of movement towards a goal. This sense of a goal and the reminder of the coming kingdom which is the theme of his preaching (cf. 1:15), tend to coalesce in the readers expectation, so that the expectation of the kingdom and the expectation of the goal of Jesus' journey are associated closely together.

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38 Williams, 95.

6. Suppliant #3: A Leper Cleansed (1:40–45)

1. Text to Reader

Since the disciples are entirely absent, the reader-oriented dynamics of the next scene arise solely from the interaction between Jesus and the leper. There is much to align the reader with both parties, although the readers are strongly aligned overall with the suppliant.

1.1 A Leper's Doubt (v.40)

The man who came to him (v.40a), presumably during the Galilean tour, is characterised by reference to him being λεπρός. This description focalises the scene through him, as does the provision of his direct speech, supported by two participles (παρακαλῶν ... λέγων), which decreases the distance between him and the readers. The speech itself, expressing certainty about Jesus' ability, but some doubt about his willingness to cleanse him,[1] completes the process by revealing the leper's inner doubts, for such 'inside views' powerfully align implied readers and characters.[2]

Having been aligned so strongly with the leper, the readers want to know, with him, whether Jesus is willing to cleanse him. This alignment enables the readers to see Jesus' actions and hear his declarations as if they were the leper and to enter somewhat into the suppliant's feelings.[3]

1.2 Jesus' Willingness (vv.41f.)

After drawing the readers into the leper's feelings, the story then reveals Jesus' feelings, the exact nature of which depends upon solving a textual difficulty. Despite

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1 Despite the attempts to minimise his doubt (Taylor; Cranfield; Guelich [1989]; Williams, 96), the fact that Jesus assures him of his willingness is incomprehensible if there was no doubt present! It is a doubt about willingness, not ability. Hooker comments that it is hardly strange that he doubts Jesus' willingness, since this would involve Jesus coming near to him, a leper.

2 For inside views, see Booth (1983), e.g. 5, 11–13, 17, 163–165, 245–249.

3 Williams, 96–98, 103f., misses these dynamics and so denies any 'identification' of reader with leper.

σπλαγχνισθείς being the majority text, ὀργισθείς should be read,[4] and it should be explained along with ἐμβριμησάμενος[5] (v.43). The make-up and usage of this participle, which continues the view into Jesus' emotions, suggests a connotation of strength which is directed outwards, but forced inwards.

What sense can be made of Jesus' anger at this point in the story? It follows immediately after the leper's statement, and supplies the force behind Jesus' touch and expression of willingness. There is little to suggest anger at any infringement of the law, or the interruption of Jesus' preaching ministry; still less at some foreseen 'disobedience'.[6] A reaction to the foul disease or a connection with Jesus' assault on Satan are both possible, but they rely on assumptions that are not explicit in the text itself and difficult to prove from it. The most natural suggestion is that the deep emotion is aroused by the leper's doubts about Jesus' willingness; cf. the interpretation of Ephraem (4th AD), who wrote 'Quia dixit: "Si vis", iratus est'.[7] Angry at the doubt, but in direct counterpoint to it, Jesus assures the leper of his willingness (θέλω), before issuing an imperative in regard to his cleansing (καθαρίσθητι).

The readers are placed in some tension by the supply of two very powerful inside views, drawing them towards the leper on one hand (doubt), and Jesus on the other (anger). Jesus' reply evaluates the doubts, showing that they are groundless. Jesus' emotions are not evaluated, and they are emphasised through using two verbs expressing strong emotions (vv.41, 43). The dynamics of the relationships between narrator, readers and Jesus, coupled with the use of the powerful device of the inside view, makes the readers very reluctant to evaluate Jesus negatively.

The strong pull to both leper and Jesus creates a tension which seeks a resolution allowing for both emotions. The strong alignment with the leper encourages the reader

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4 *Pace* Metzger, with Turner. It is the most difficult reading and the change is easily explained.

5 It is a fairly rare word (see Mt 9:30, Mk 14:5 and Jn 11:33). The Greek materials contain one occurrence prior to the NT (Aesch. *Theb.* 461), two in the LXX (Dan 11:30; Lam 2:6), and no examples in the non-literary material. Cf. the simple form in Lucian *Nec.* 20

6 So Williams, 97f.

7 Cf. Turner, 157, '... perhaps because of his doubt of the will to heal'.

to adopt his situation, recognise his need and share in his doubt, and wonder about Jesus' willingness to cleanse. Since Jesus is shown to be angry at the doubt — in which the readers have been implicated —, the inside view of Jesus' emotions comes as a shock to the readers. His statement of willingness provides the negative evaluation of the doubt, but the strong emotion also adds a great deal of force against it. Because the readers have been aligned with the leper, the evaluation of the doubt is not from a distance, which would lead to the readers sitting in judgement over him, but from within, which leads them to also feel the need to correct the doubts by changing their picture of Jesus.[8] The strong emotion stresses the massive extent to which these doubts were wrong which adds urgency to the need for change.

If this reading has cogency, then, perhaps strangely, the emotion that so often has been regarded negatively actually serves a positive narrative point. Jesus is offended at the leper's doubts: he is so willing to cleanse that the contrary suggestion arouses a 'righteous anger'. This leads directly to a touch, an expression of willingness, an imperative of cleansing, and an immediate result. The fulfilment of his command is narrated without much drama (v.42), affirming that Jesus' ability to cleanse was not the issue. At the same time his action has powerfully demonstrated that, whatever ability he may have had, he was certainly willing to use it.

Then, still 'holding in his emotion' (to paraphrase ἐμβριμησάμενος), even after the deed has been done, he threw the man out (v.43), telling him to hurry to the priests to get his proof of cleansing, not even stopping to tell anyone what has happened to him (v.44). The breathtaking flow of events, issuing from Jesus' strong emotional reaction to the man's request, underlines the point of the story: Jesus is willing — more than willing — to cleanse this man, and, duly certified, to get him back to his new life.

1.3 Unofficial Publicity (vv.43–45)

This also enables a better understanding of the leper's subsequent actions. After going out, the leper began spreading abroad τὸν λόγον — presumably 'the matter', i.e.

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[8] See the similar explanation of the women's fear in 16:8 offered by Boomershine and Bartholomew.

what had occurred. Although the leper does not follow Jesus' instructions, this is not evaluated negatively.[9] Jesus' 'command to silence' ought to be understood as an attempt to limit *when* he might tell others. Before speaking, he was to show himself to the priest in order to gain the necessary μαρτύριον for the people,[10] which, once given, would strengthen the proclamation of his cure. This suggests that the leper's eager proclamation (v.45) simply occurred *too early*. His actions are entirely consistent with positive narrative norms (1:27f., 32–34), and, in fact, the absence of such a response seemed strange (1:31) not the presence. With nothing to encourage the readers' condemnation,[11] these previous textual norms and the readers' sympathetic alignment with the leper, provide strong encouragement to share in his joyous reaction. The leper was so affected by Jesus' willingness to cleanse him that he was impelled to spread the news even before the appointed time, apparently causing great crowds to flock to Jesus even when he was hiding in the desert (v.45).

1.4 Impact

By effectively removing the leper's doubt and majoring upon his 'negative' characterisation of the leper (i.e. his supposed 'disobedience'), Williams misses the factors strongly aligning leper and readers. He does identify two 'positive characterisations' (the leper's recognition of Jesus' authority and his confidence in Jesus' ability), but allows them insufficient strength to overcome the supposed negative characterisation. As a result, he explains the positive characteristics as things which make him 'worthy of the compassion of Jesus',[12] yielding a fairly cognitive explanation which effectively aligns the reader with Jesus, rather than with the man.[13]

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9 *Pace* the stress on his (and others') 'disobedience' in Williams, 98, 135.

10 This is a dative of indirect object. 'The certificate obtained from the priest will serve as evidence to the people that the leper has been cured and is fit for readmission to society,' Trites, 70. Coupled with ἀλλά, as a contrast between the two commands, this indicates that Jesus wishes the man to have official confirmation of his cleansing before he starts talking. The 'command to silence' springs from an eagerness for him to gain this endorsement and return to normal life.

11 This removes Williams' one item of 'negative' characterisation (e.g. p.103).

12 Williams, 95f.

13 Williams, 96.

Granted, the dynamics of the scene are complex. Several powerful devices decrease the distance between the readers and both parties and due weight must be given to the complex effect of this interaction. The initial alignment with the leper and his doubt enables the readers to hear Jesus' statement of willingness from the sufferer's point of view. The strong expression of Jesus' emotion then adds great force to this willingness, which not only strengthens the willingness of Jesus (as described above), but also, by conveying Jesus' offence, offers a powerful critique of any doubts which pull in the opposite direction. By being aligned with the leper, the implied readers are aligned with his situation of need, but they then experience the powerful and confronting revelation of Jesus' willingness, not through being forced to 'change shoes' and feel the emotions with him, but rather through a revelation that comes towards them in their (the leper's) situation of need. Any doubt they may have about Jesus' willingness is met with a powerful, overwhelming emotional expression to the contrary which immediately rules out such doubts in such a way as to intimidate the one who was foolish enough to entertain them.

After such an emotional engagement, the reader easily enters into the leper's actions subsequent to the healing. After doubt is removed by swift, concrete action, the resultant joy and the impossibility of keeping the tongue still even for a brief moment seems the most natural response in the world. Whether made official or not, this matter can only go public.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Leprosy and Death

2.1.1 Leprosy

Although the precise diagnosis of λέπρα — clearly not Hansen's disease (cf. Plut. *Q.Conviv.* 8.9, 731A–B; Celsus, *De medicina* 3)[14] — is difficult, this does not inhibit understanding the condition as an *illness*. Unpleasant skin diseases would have

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14 Cf. Lloyd Davies, 137; one of many articles seeking to prove this point. Hulse provides a good discussion of the issues. Hooker, 78 intimates that Hansen's disease would, however, be included under the Hebrew term.

affected quite a substantial group of people. For example, one (admittedly high) estimate for a town, or tribe, of two thousand places 'about thirty unproductive members outside the camp'.[15] Λέπρα was a distressing illness,[16] probably consisting of a number of conditions, all producing a rough, scaly skin condition, which, whatever the personal discomfort entailed, clearly disfigured the skin so that the sufferer would stand out from the crowd and would engender disgust in others, cf. its categorisation amongst 'disfigurements rather than diseases' (ἀεικέα μᾶλλον ἢ νοσήματα, Hipp. *Aff.* 35). To capture both the information drawn from the various medical descriptions, as well as the consequent distress of the disease on the sufferer, Hulse suggests the translation, 'a repulsive scaly skin disease'.[17]

2.1.2 Leprosy and Death

Unlike fever, λέπρα was not known as a killer[18] — although its listing amongst the diseases which are not fatal unless complications develop (Hipp. *Dis.I* 3) indicates that there was some risk of death. Nevertheless, leprosy was connected with death. In the first place, it made the sufferer corpse-like. When the LXX has Aaron plead for Miriam μὴ γένηται ὡσεὶ ἴσον θανάτῳ (Num 12:12), it is probably referring to her corpse-like appearance (cf. 'Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away'). Qumran's version of the Levitical regulations had the priest identifying cases of leprosy by noticing the amount of dead skin (e.g. 4Q272 [4QD^{g}] 1 I 1–20 = 4QD^{b} 9 I.1–12). Perhaps more importantly, leprosy was associated with death because in some nations, Israel included (cf. Lev 13:45f.), it rendered the person unclean and liable to banishment from their community.

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15 Hulse, 100, based on the incidence of psoriasis.

16 Emphasised by Hulse, 100; and Lloyd Davies.

17 Hulse, 104.

18 Just like leprosy proper, Pilch (1988), 62.

2.1.3 Banishment

It appears to have been well-known that certain 'barbarian' nations isolated λέπρα sufferers from mainstream society. Herodotus reported the practice amongst the Persians:

> The citizen who has leprosy or the white sickness (ὃς ἂν τῶν ἀστῶν λέπρην ἢ λεύκην ἔχῃ) may not come into a town or consort with other Persians. They say that he is so afflicted because he has sinned in some wise against the sun. Many drive every stranger, who takes such a disease, out of the country ...
>
> (Hdt. 1.138)

But the most famous example, it seems, was the Egyptian banishment of the Jews. It was widely rumoured that the Jews originated from a group of lepers expelled from Egypt. In the 1st century BC, Diodorus Siculus (34/35.1–2), possibly drawing upon Posidonius, reported that when Antiochus VII Euergetes (assumed throne 139/8 BC) besieged Jerusalem (cf. Joseph. *AJ* 13.236ff.) his friends had advised him to wipe out the Jews completely. They spoke of the ancestors of the Jews as

> 'having been exiled (πεφυγαδευμένους) from all Egypt as men who were impious and detested by the gods. For by way of purging the country all persons who had white or leprous marks on their bodies (τοὺς ἀλφοὺς ἢ λέπρας ἔχοντας ἐν τοῖς σώμασι) had been assembled and driven across the border, as being under a curse (ὡς ἐναγεῖς);

Pompeius Trogus, during the reign of Augustus (27 BC – AD 14), also recorded the story:

> The Egyptians, when they were suffering from scabies and skin-disease, on the advice of an oracle, to prevent further spreading of the plague expelled [Moses] along with the diseased from the frontiers of Egypt. So he became leader of the exiles ...
>
> (Justinus *Epitome* 1.10–2.16)

In the late first century, Josephus found it necessary to refute this rumour of Jewish origins at some length. His arguments surfaced in *Antiquities*, where he disputed in particular the view that Moses was a leper (*AJ* 3.265; cf. Ex 4:6f.). Later, in *Contra Apion*, he disputed its various versions in Manetho (fl. 280 BC; *Ap.* 1.118–287), Chaeremon (1st AD; 1.288–292), Lysimachus (post 2nd BC; 1.312–320) and Apion (2.8–32), who was in Rome under Tiberius and Claudius. Since Josephus

found it necessary to dispute this opinion at the end of the century, and Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.3–5) repeated the rumour, apparently drawing upon Lysimachus, this ancient view of Jewish origins was evidently current and persistent in the first century — and beyond — and was perhaps particularly well-known amongst the Romans.

Although Israel's (rather strange) laws were apparently widely known in general, especially those relating to dietary restrictions, circumcision and the Sabbath,[19] it is difficult to say just how widely known were their practices in regard to leprosy. Plutarch explains their well-known abstinence from pork[20] in terms of their abhorrence of leprosy:

> … because the barbarians above all people (μάλιστα πάντων) abhor the white disease on the skin and *lepra* (λεύκας καὶ λέπρας) and they think human beings are fed such sufferings by touch, and we observe on every pig *lepra* sailing up under the belly (ὑπὸ τὴν γαστέρα λέπρας ἀνάπλεων) and scaly eruptions …
>
> (*Quaest.conv.* 4.5, 670F)

Although μάλιστα πάντων indicates that other nations did not like these diseases either, evidently Greeks like Plutarch found such extremes of abhorrence rather odd. Elsewhere he reports that the Egyptians had a similar reason for regarding the pig as unclean (*De I et O.* 353F).[21] So, at least by Plutarch's day, it is possible to explain a Jewish / Egyptian dietary habit by reference to fact that both were amongst 'the barbarians [who] above all people abhor the white disease on the skin and *lepra*'.

But although the Jews' abhorrence of λέπρα was known, as was the barbarian practice of excluding the leprous, no testimony apparently survives which clearly shows that the Jewish policy of banishing lepers was a matter of general knowledge. In fact, Josephus seems aware that his readers would regard the banishment practices as rather odd. In *Jewish War* he found it necessary to explain that lepers were not just excluded from the temple, but from the city altogether (5.226); and that they were

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19 Cf. the texts collected in Whittaker, Pt. 1.

20 The question also bothered Caligula, (Philo *Legat.* 361), Apion (Joseph, *Ap.* 2.13.137), and Epictetus (1.22.4).

21 Cf. Aelian, *NA* 10.16; Tac. *Hist.* 5.4.

excluded from the Passover sacrifice (6.426). Israel's oddity in the ancient world is highlighted at this point by the fact that 'none of the many preserved sacred laws include the diseased among the polluted persons banned from entering a temple.'[22] In the *Antiquities*, as well as acknowledging how different Israel's practice was from other nations (*AJ* 3.265), he had to explain why the four lepers lived at the gate (9.74; 2Kgs 7:3). The picture is a little ambiguous, however, for when he argued against the rumours regarding Israel's leprous origins, he apparently assumed knowledge of Israel's leprosy laws. For, if Moses was himself a leper, he argued, then why would he create a law which excluded such people (*AJ* 3.265)?

Although the barbarians may have banished lepers, we have noted that Plutarch regarded the practice as part of a rather extreme abhorrence. Josephus knew that exactly the opposite scenario prevailed 'among many nations [where] there are lepers in the enjoyment of honours, who, far from undergoing contumely and exile, conduct the most brilliant careers, are entrusted with offices of state, and have the right of entry to sacred courts and temples' (*AJ* 3.265). For sure, even the people of these 'sophisticated' nations would prefer to be free of the condition[23] and they were well aware that, if not λέπρα, then certainly associated diseases could be signs of the gods' displeasure.[24] But there was also an awareness that the threat of contracting the disease was minimal (Ps-Arist. *Prob.* 8, 887^{a}34) and the Greeks had long known of various remedies for it. With such knowledge available, it is not surprising that the barbarians' extreme abhorrence of the lepers' condition was regarded as odd. How much more strange would their banishment appear?

However, although odd, it was not completely without analogy. The sources already discussed show an awareness that λέπρα was associated with some kind of impurity and similar skin diseases were also regarded in this way by some in the

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22 Parker, 219. In fact, the diseased came to the temples in search of cure.

23 Cf. Ar. *Av.* 151f.; with Paus. 5.5.4–5

24 For example, ἀλφός (Hesiod fr. 133 = P.Oxy 2488A), although the LXX distinguished λέπρα and ἀλφός (cf. Lev 13:39). Cf. [Plut] *Fluv.* 21.4.

Greco-Roman world. The 'unclean' had the taint of death,[25] in which case banishment would be justified.

Exile itself became associated with impurity. In Homer the involuntary and even the 'justified' killer could be permanently exiled due to threat of revenge by the dead person's kin (*Il.* 23.85–8; *Od.* 22.27–32). In Attic law, such exile was associated with impurity; for the 'involuntary killer' incurred exile and could not return until he had been purified (Dem. 23.72). In fact, exile itself was commonly regarded as a means of purification (Aesch. *Ag.* 1419f, *Cho.* 1038, Eur. *Hipp.* 35, Pl. *Leg.* 865D–E; cf. Nic. *Dam.* 90 FGrH fr. 45).[26] Orestes, son of Agamemnon was a famous exile (e.g. Aesch. *Cho.* 1ff., 115, 136, 181f., 332ff., 940, 1038; Soph. *El.* 601, 773ff., 1132ff.; Eur. *El.* 233, 236, 352, 587, 834), who, according to one version, was exiled due to the threat of 'leprous ulcers' at the hands of the *alastores* (Aesch. *Cho.* 278–296). Although it is impossible to say how widely this version circulated, wherever it was known it would have provided a further reference point for understanding the notions of a skin-disease being a curse from the underworld, and entailing the 'death' of exile.

Several writers of the Imperial period attempted to appraise exile philosophically, in order to console those enduring it. Since their endeavours 'protest too much', they speak eloquently of the terrors which exile evoked and of the need for the consolation they sought to offer. They realise that their approach was vastly different to that of the majority (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.2; Plut. *De exilio* 599F, 605F) for whom clearly exile was regarded as one of life's great calamities. P.Berol.21198[27] (2nd/3rd AD), which predicts that someone 'will wander from place to place …', may endorse this picture gleaned from the literary sources, for it considers being separated from home an evil.[28] In the Biblical tradition, the fear of this 'evil' is as old as the story of Cain (Gen 4:12–16).

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25 Parker, 218.

26 Further discussion in Parker, 114–118, 375–392.

27 Brashear (1995b)2.

28 Brashear (1995b), 213.

Given these views of exile, it is not without significance that the story of the Israelite lepers being cast out of Egypt describes them as 'exiles' (Justinus, *Epitome* 1.10–2.16; Diod.Sic. 34.1–3; Tac. *Hist.* 5:1–13). No doubt in imitation of this tendency, when Josephus refers to the Israelite practice of banishing lepers, he also uses the language of exile (*AJ* 3.265).

So, whether or not the Greco-Roman endorsed, or understood the practice of banishing lepers, it was analogous to the well-known practice of exile. It would therefore not be difficult for them to realise that 'the biggest fear deriving from this kind of a situation is that the afflicted person may never be able to return to the community.'[29] For banishment was exclusion from the community, and so from life itself, with the terrible prospect of dying on foreign soil. In a very real sense, to be banished as a leper was to live under the sentence of death.

Although the philosophical writers tried to soften the blow of exile by recommending a change in nomenclature, so that exile was simply 'a change of place' (Sen. *ad Helv.* 6.1), the general populace was of a different opinion. For some it was a fate worse than death: 'I would rather be killed today than banished tomorrow' (cf. Arr. *Epict.Diss.* 1.1.26–27; Tac. *Hist.* 5.13), while others agreed with Polyneices, who, when asked whether exile is κακὸν μέγα 'a sore evil', replied μέγιστον· ἔργῳ δ' ἐστὶ μεῖζον ἢ λόγῳ, 'The sorest: In deed sorer than in word' (Eur. *Phoen.* 389).

Exile was not simply a problem for the upper classes, but it was a fearful prospect for the nameless mass of people who, if defeated, could be sure of being taken away into slavery. Their exile, of course, was of far greater consequence than an enforced retirement to some island! Tacitus, for example, observed that both men and women were prepared to fight during the siege of Jerusalem, because 'should they be forced to change their homes they feared life more than death (Tac. *Hist.* 5.13).

By the time of Epictetus, exile often appears in lists of misfortunes, alongside death (Arr. *Diss.Epict.* 1.4.24; 1.11.33; 1.29.6; 3.22.21; 3.24.29; 4.1.60; 4.1.172; fr.

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29 Pilch (1988), 63.

21 = Stob. 3.7.16; 3.3.17; *Ench.* 32.3). He used these two potential disasters to bring life into proper focus: 'Keep before your eyes day by day death and exile, and everything that seems terrible, but most of all death; and then you will never have any abject thought, nor will you yearn for anything beyond measure' (Arr. *Ench.* 21).

So closely were they related that exile could be pictured as death. So, when Seneca sought to console his mother after his own exile he pictured himself as 'a man who was lifting his head from the bier to comfort his dear ones' (Sen. *ad Helv.* 1.3). He sympathised with his mother for, after burying so many others, she must now mourn the living (2.5) and consoled her with a sustained analogy between her, whose son was exiled, and that of other women whose sons had died (15–16).

Thus, even if leprosy itself was not explicitly connected with death, because it was known that barbarian nations banished the leper, and because banishment was feared as a living death, the Greco-Roman reader would recognise that the banished leper is one of the living dead.

2.2 Leprosy and the Dead

Although it is conceivable that λέπρα was one of the skin diseases that could be inflicted through the workings of magic, i.e. through the influence of the dead, this is difficult to prove. I have found no clear instance of λέπρα in the Greek magical texts — although this is perhaps not surprising, given that it was not regarded as a curse to the same extent as it was in barbarian nations such as Persia and Israel.

The Semitic magical material includes curses inflicting skin diseases. At least two Babylonian incantations seek to ward off a long list of skin diseases (Farber**4.1** and **4.5**[30]), which, through their allusion to the cooling waters of the 'daughters of Anu',[31] have invited comparison with the story of Naaman washing away his leprosy (2Kgs

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30 See Farber, 299.

31 These obscure women function 'as a sort of divine fire brigade' against eye troubles, skin diseases, and inflammations; Farber, 302.

5).[32] A Mesopotamian incantation refers to what seems to be a skin disease inflicted by a ghost when it says '"They" consume all my flesh for me. ... A ghost was set on me so as to consume me' (Scurlock **Prescr63**).[33]

It may also be of relevance that the Persians believed a person to be afflicted with leprosy because 'he has sinned in some wise against the sun' (Hdt. 1.138). The leprous Jews were also said to have sinned against the sun, according to Lysimachus' version of the rumour (*Ap.* 1.34.304–311). Helios was addressed in many magical spells as the god who releases the *daimons* from the underworld in order to bring about the magician's purposes. Although admittedly speculative, when read against Helios' role in magic, if λέπρα was a sin against the sun, could this illness also indicate that it had come about through *daimonic* activity?

Although I have not found λέπρα in the Greek magical curses or protective charms, there is the occasional reference to skin conditions. SuppMag**88**.1–5, a *logos* designed to combat the febrile skin disease erysipelas, is similar at a number of points to the Philinna papyrus (PGM XX [1st BC]),[34] whose rubric prescribes the spell πρὸς πᾶν κατάκαυμα, which is 'an expression that can refer to a fever or a reddish, burning eruption or rash on the skin, such as shingles.'[35] In a curse (*IG* XII.9, **1179** = Lattimore, 116–117, Gager**86** [2nd AD]) protecting some baths, a Gentile who 'had learned from his contacts with Judaism [...] that the text of the Bible could be used as a source book for potent curses'[36] added some Deuteronomic curses to his model (cf. *IG* XII.9, **955**), including 'itch' (cf. Dt 28:22, 28)[37] (cf. the bowl text including itch, N-S**9** = Gager**109**). A Latin curse threatens the *color*, 'colour, pigment of skin' (DT**190**.5), which comes close to a skin diseases such as λέπρα, λεύκη and ἀλφός which made the skin colour turn white.

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32 Faraone (1995), 308 n.32, on PGM XX.

33 Cf. Scurlock, 91 n.445.

34 Cf. Faraone (1995), 297 n.2.

35 Faraone (1995), 298 n.4.

36 Gager, 185.

37 Jewish grave inscriptions also invoke Deuteronomic curses; cf. Gager**91**.

Although it is difficult to prove or disprove, perhaps curses against people's 'flesh' (σάρξ) were aiming to produce skin problems (DT**38**.23; **41** a.20; **155** b.14, 25),[38] since the white skin disease threatened against Orestes at the hands of the Erinyes certainly ate the flesh away (Aesch. *Cho*. 278–296). However, I am inclined to understand σάρξ in the curses as being against what we would term muscle, i.e. the flesh between skin and bone (see discussion on Suppliant #4, below).

So, although the pickings are sparse, it seems that skin diseases could certainly be part of magical curses, and 'leprosy' could well have been one of the options. If this was so, then the leper would represents a person who had potentially been afflicted by the forces of death. The ghosts of the dead could shrivel the skin so that it looked like a corpse; they could make the leper one of the living dead.

3. Jesus and the leper

When Jesus cleansed this man, his body went from being corpse-like, to being like that of any other person, and he was able at last to go home. Jesus sent him quickly to the priests for official confirmation, eager to get him back to life amongst the living. He had brought him from death to life.[39]

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38 Cf. Scurlock LKA84.14, 17, cf. 20 = **Prescr63**.

39 Cf. the Rabbinic saying that healing a leper was as difficult as raising the dead; alluded to in Hooker, 78.

7. Suppliant #4: A Paralytic Raised (2:1–12)

1. Text to Reader: A Paralytic Raised

Jesus' return to Capernaum recalls the events which previously occurred there (v.1, πάλιν), raising the expectation that something similar might happen. The people of the town heard that he was 'in the house', presumably that of Simon and Andrew and, once again, a huge crowd gathered in the house (v.2, cf. 1:32–34).

Once again, the disciples are absent, and the readers are focalised through a suppliant, this time a man in need and his friends.[1] Initially, the scene is focalised through the group carrying the paralytic (v.3). The readers are privileged to share in the sense of frustration at not being able to get through the crowd which motivates their digging through the roof (v.4). By slowing the tempo, the vivid detail focuses the readers upon this roof scene, further aligning them with this group and their cause. The readers feel the blockage posed by the crowd and the delight in finding a way around the problem. This produces a keen anticipation of the paralytic's ultimate arrival at the goal and his cure as Jesus deals with his problem. As the man is lowered through the roof, it is almost as if the readers travel with him.

Jesus 'seeing' their faith (cf. ἰδών, v.5) is not so much an inside view of perception, as a figure of speech for shrewd inference based on observed behaviour.[2] This does not disalign the readers from the paralytic and his party, who hear Jesus' direct speech as if they were the man. Since the scene has already created the expectation that Jesus will cure the man, his statement about forgiveness arrives with as much shock value to the readers as for the characters.

The scribes then appear in person for the first time in the narrative (v.6; cf. 1:22), and the narrator supplies an inside view of their reaction to Jesus' pronouncement. The narrative has already erected an opposition between Jesus' authority and theirs (1:22;

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1 Williams, 99f, 101.

2 Fowler, 121.

cf. v.27), and now their internal questioning[3] revolves around exactly this question. The inside view aligns the readers with these men, especially since initially they voice the readers' question as well. After expecting Jesus to deal with the paralytic's physical problem and hearing instead an announcement about forgiveness, it seems perfectly appropriate to ask 'why is this man speaking in this way?'. The scribes take it further, revealing that they consider Jesus to be blaspheming, for 'who is able to forgive sins, except one person, God?' Their rhetorical question provides the readers with one potential evaluation of Jesus' surprising statement. Since the authority of these men has been pitched against that of Jesus, their opinion may be suspect, but certainly their question joins that of the readers. Jesus' pronouncement and the scribal questions have opened gaps in the discourse which now seek answers.

Next, the readers are supplied with 'an inside view into Jesus having an inside view'[4] — as Jesus immediately perceives by his spirit that they were reasoning this way (v.8). Because the readers have also been 'in' their mind, pondering the questions they ponder, Jesus' inside view represents him knowing the readers' question as well! His question exposes opponent and reader at one and the same time: 'Why are you discussing these things in your hearts?' His ability to do so enhances his authority over that of the scribes.

After bringing everybody's question out in the open, he counters with one of his own (v.9). The question whether it was easier to forgive the man, or to raise him (ἐγείρειν) and send him home forces the realisation that both are equally hard, and probably imply the same thing: for God is both the one who forgives sins, and the one who heals. The purpose clause provides the explanation of the demonstration before it occurs,[5] and of Jesus' authority which has been on the agenda since the beginning of Mark's first major section. The authority which was demonstrated (1:16–20) and then recognised (1:21–28) is now explained as the authority of the Son of Man (Dan 7:13–

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3 For internal speech, see Fowler, 125.

4 Fowler, 75, cf. 123.

5 This reads naturally as Jesus' speech, rather than the narrator's; *pace* Fowler, 102f., 131.

14) and for the purpose of bringing the forgiveness for which the land has been waiting for (cf. 1:4).

Jesus does not say what he will do to demonstrate this authority, he simply does it. He instructs the paralytic to rise, take up his mat and go home (v.11), which he does (v.12a). By a flowback effect, this forces the readers to answer the previous questions: if Jesus can do this, then he is the Son of Man with authority to forgive sins on the land (v.10), and if he can forgive sins, then what does this say about his relationship to God, the only one who can forgive sins and heal? The scene ends with utter amazement and a chorus of praise (cf. 1:27). Being so closely aligned with the paralytic's cause, the readers are moved to join in the chorus.

Although the story does reveal the increasing conflict with Jesus' opponents, it primarily deals with another case of Jesus providing real help to a person in need. The assertion that the 'portrayal of minor characters in this section [i.e. 2:1–3:6] is subservient to his narration of the growing antagonism of the religious authorities against Jesus'[6] makes the functionalist mistake of subordinating all to the plot and misunderstands the important role the suppliants play in creating the total impact of the narrative. This impact comes through the narrator providing enough characterisation to ensure that the reader is sufficiently aligned with the suppliants' situation, in order to appreciate Jesus' impact upon it.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Paralysis

2.1.1 A Paralytic

The adjective παραλυτικός makes its first literary appearance in the first century (Dsc. 1:16 [*ca.* AD 50]; Mk 2:1–12, par. Mt 9:2–8;[7] 4:24; 8:6).[8] —, and its only documentary attestation — in a fragmentary medical text referring to those suffering from epilepsy and paralysis: ... παθὼν οἷον ἐπιληπτικ[ὼν] | [--- παρ]αλυτικῶν καὶ

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6 Williams, 98.

7 Lk 5:18, 24 has the participle παραλελυμένος. Cf. Acts 8:7, 9:33; Heb 12:12.

8 Cf. Rufus 1st/2nd AD, ap.Orib.8.39

τῶν περὶ τὰ | [---] (Carlini**32**;[9] cf. *NewDocs3*, **55**.16–17). From what was this man suffering?

The conclusion of the scene suggests that the man had problems with his legs (vv.9b–12). This comports well with Galen's view of παράλυσις which was partial, in contrast to ἀποπληξία in which 'all the nerves together have been destroyed, both sensation and movement' (Gal. 8.208; cf. Aret. *De causis* 1.6.11). However, this definition of παράλυσις is perhaps a little too 'modern', as is its counterpart in LSJ: 'the disabling of nerves'.

2.1.2 A Condition of the Nerves

Although the two aspects of (nervous) paralysis — loss of sensation and of movement — had been recognised before him (e.g. Thphr. *De nerv. res.* 11.1 [4th–3rd BC]), the anatomical studies of Erasistratus of Ceos, who lived in Alexandria (3rd BC), led to the clear dissection of motor and sensory nerves, and, following his lead (Galen 6.602), τὰ νεῦρα eventually provided the linguistic basis for our 'neurones'/nerves. Paralysis was recognised as the loss of sensation and strength by Rufus of Ephesus (αἴσθησιν καὶ ἰσχύν, cf. *De sat. et gon.* 47), physician under Trajan (98–117 AD), who had probably studied in Alexandria[10] and certainly by Galen's time (Galen 8.208) when Erasistratus' school flourished. In what was probably his most remarkable achievement, Galen himself conducted experiments showing the differing types of paralysis resulting from sectioning different levels of the spinal cord. His findings, however, were not developed and were not adequately appreciated until the nineteenth century.[11]

2.1.3 A Condition of the Sinews

However, before these ideas prevailed, τὰ νεῦρα were the sinews/tendons and παράλυσις was a descriptive term for what occurs when various parts of the body are 'loosened from the side, detached' (cf. παραλύω). The difference between the 'more

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9 Could the text continue with a reference to νεῦρα (cf. Dsc. 3.78)?

10 Edelstein, 938.

11 Singer and Wasserstein (1970a), 60.

recent' and the more ancient understandings can be demonstrated from two conditions mentioned in Greek only by Strabo (64/3 BC–AD 21+). He explains στομακάκκη and σκελοτύρβη, as being παράλυσις concerning the mouth and concerning the legs, respectively (16.4.24), but when Pliny describes them it is clear that they have nothing to do with (our) nerves, for they refer to a condition in which the teeth fall out and the use of the knee-joints fails (*HN* 25.20; cf. Heb 12:12). In the first century, a variety of conditions could still be listed together with paralysis — including epilepsy[12] — because they were considered to be πάθη περὶ τὰ νεῦρα, 'afflictions concerning the sinews' (Dsc. 3.78; cf. ?Carlini**32**[13]).

2.2 Paralysis and Death

2.2.1 Chronic or Acute?

Although impossible to prove either way, the man's condition may not have been chronic, for paralysis could also occur in acute conditions (cf. Mt 8:6). Generally speaking, it was the acute illnesses which caused the most deaths (Hipp. *Aff.* 13), which means that the more acute his case, the more his life was on the line. On the other hand, the more chronic, the closer he was to the 'living death' category.

2.2.2 Death from Paralysis

Paralysis has a verbal link with death, in that παραλύω was used for 'releasing from life' (παραλύσαι ψυχάν, Eur. *Alc.* 118; παραλύσας ἑαυτὸν τοῦ ζῆν, Strabo 8.6.14, cf. Plut. *Ant.* 82.3 =Loeb 82.1). But the connection was more than verbal, for people actually 'died of paralysis', such as the Epicurean, Polyaenus (ἐτελεύτα δὲ παραλύσει; D.L. 10.25). One cause of life-threatening paralysis was drinking unmixed wine (Diod. 4.3.4–5), as in the case of Lacydes, whose 'death was a paralysis brought on by drinking too freely' (ἡ τελευτὴ δὲ αὐτῷ παράλυσις ἐκ πολυποσίας; D.L. 4.61; cf. *AG* 7.105 and 104).

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12 Dsc. 1.6, cf. Eup. 1.226; Dsc. 4.183; Carlini**32**; cf. Mt 4:24.

13 See n. 9.

2.2.3 Death Invading the Body

In a case of paralysis, death was already encroaching upon the person's body, even while alive. Hippocrates apparently regarded a paralysed leg as if it were that of a corpse (ὡς νεκρῶδες, Aret. *De causis* 1.7.2).[14] When Speusippus sent for Xenocrates to take over his school, 'already by paralysis even his body was corrupted' (ἤδη δὲ ὑπὸ παραλύσεως καὶ τὸ σῶμα διέφθαρτο, D.L. 4.3.3). The 'corruption' of death had already invaded his body.

2.2.4 The Sinews and 'the Bonds of the Soul'

This 'corrupting' process can be explained in terms of beliefs regarding the anatomical/physiological role of the sinews. Paralysis, i.e. the loosening of the sinews, placed the sufferer firmly on the path towards death, for death itself entailed such a loosening. For example, Odysseus' mother's shade instructed him that all people were like her when dead:

> For the sinews [here: ἶνες] no longer hold the flesh and the bones together, but the strong might of blazing fire destroys these, as soon as the life leaves the white bones, and the spirit, like a dream, flits away, and hovers to and fro.
>
> (*Od.* 11.218ff.; cf. *Il.* 23.97ff.)

This idea was echoed in Plato's cosmogony, where the 'loosening' of the soul from within the marrow took place in old age 'when the bonds of the triangles in the marrow ... let slip in turn the bonds of the soul, and it, when thus naturally set loose, flies out gladly' (*Ti.* 81D). Although this refers to the natural decline of the body in the course of old age, the same occurs in death from disease, although, being against nature, in this case the release is painful and violent (*Ti.* 81E).

The relationship between a condition afflicting the sinews and death is illuminated by his explanation of the construction of the body and the process of disease. When the demiurges constructed man,[15] they began with the soul and worked outwards (*Ti.* 69D). The four elements (earth, fire, water and air) were moulded into marrow, which

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14 The saying is not in the Hippocratic corpus.

15 The creation of woman would occur later (cf. *Ti.* 76D).

acted as 'the bonds of the soul' (73B–C). The immortal soul was placed in the portion of the marrow of the brain and the mortal soul in the marrow of the vertebral column and its offshoots (73D). For protection, this was encased with bone which was made from earth and marrow, dipped in fire and water so that neither could destroy it. The sinews and flesh were added to bind all limbs together and to protect the bone from heat and cold, respectively (74B–C), and finally the skin (76A).[16]

On such an understanding of the body, rooted in the older view that the soul is in the bones (cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.218ff.), the sinews are closely linked to the bodily components so essential to life. Thus, disease in the sinews is very serious. Since the body is compacted out of the four elements, one class of diseases arises from various imbalances amongst these. The sinews have a prominent place in a second class of diseases, in which a reverse of the normal nutrition process occurs. In the order of nature, flesh and sinews arise from blood and produce a substance which nourishes the bone, and, in turn, the marrow (82D).[17] The severest diseases with the most dangerous results (82C) come from a reversal of this direction (82E). The decomposition of the flesh places products of corruption in the blood which unite 'with the air' (μετὰ πνεύματος) which leads to bile and phlegm. This destroys the blood, the nourishment, and, eventually, the body itself (83A).

When the flesh is being decomposed, if its bases remain firm, the force of the attack is halved (83E). But it is very severe 'whenever the substance which binds the flesh to the bones (cf. 82D) becomes diseased and no longer separates itself at once from them and from the sinews, so as to provide food for the bone and to serve as a bond between flesh and bone' (84A–B). Even more severe are the diseases of the bone, and the severest is when the marrow itself becomes diseased, 'for this results in the

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16 Cf. Pythagoras' view, D.L. 8.31.

17 Cf. Pythagoras' view, D.L. 8.30.

gravest of diseases and the most potent in causing death, inasmuch as the whole substance of the body [...] streams in the reverse direction' (84C).[18]

Such an understanding of anatomy, in which the sinews have a position just short of the marrow, the location of the soul; and of physiology, in which the sinews have a role in nurturing the marrow, the 'bonds of the soul'; and of pathology, in which a condition affecting the sinews, such as paralysis, is at the extreme end of the scale, provides a rationale for why such conditions could kill and why they were regarded as the presence of death's corruption even while a person was alive. The 'loosening of the sinews' (= paralysis) was but a short step from the loosening of the soul from the bonds which held it trapped inside the body.

While the various schools of Greek medicine agreed that disease was caused by an imbalance in the mixture of bodily constituents, they differed on what those constituents were.[19] Alcmaeon (*ca.* 500 BC)[20] had dealt with opposite powers (δυνάμεις), amongst which the pairs hot/cold and moist/dry gained special prominence. The Coan school replaced the powers, which were considered philosophical intrusions (cf. Hipp. *AncMed* 1), with humours (χωμοί), which were said to be the actual bodily constituents which possessed the powers. Plato's theories were based upon an Empedoclean foundation in the four elements, rather than the four humours, which play a secondary role (*Ti.* 82B–83). His discussion of the diseases of the secondary tissues, bone, sinew, flesh and blood, is also reminiscent of Empedocles' notion that these tissues contain the four basic elements in differing proportions (cf. *Ti.* 73B ff.).

His view that disease is caused by the reversal of the normal process of nutrition from the marrow outwards, however, appears to differ from his predecessors.[21] So how influential would these views have been? Although it is beyond the scope of this

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18 Cf. the murder of the doctor in Apul. *Met.* 10.26: 'meanwhile the [poison] raging through his intestines had been deeply absorbed into his marrow', and so he dies.

19 This paragraph draws on Cornford, 332ff.

20 Owen, 38.

21 Cornford, 336.

thesis to answer this question fully, suffice it to say that the influence may have been considerable. The resurgence of interest in Plato's ideas, which commenced at the end of the 2nd century BC, was well under way by the beginning of the 1st century AD, and stretched on into the middle Platonists like Plutarch.[22] The *Timaeus* had an important part in this resurgence, playing a 'disproportionately great role [...] in supplying the fundamental doctrines of Middle Platonism,'[23] and becoming Plato's 'most celebrated work', in fact, the 'Platonists' Bible'. The *Timaeus*, however, was not just for the philosophers, but 'its influence inevitably filtered down to men of letters and even those who had received only a smattering of learning'. As the most influential work of a philosophical nature in late antiquity, the *Timaeus* underwent 'intensive philosophical study and widespread cultural dissemination.'[24]

Although its anatomical, physiological and pathological views were not its main attraction, the success of the *Timaeus* suggests that they would have at least remained on the agenda and that they may have even enjoyed some influence.[25]

2.3. Paralysis and the Dead

2.3.1 Paralysis as Curse

An Athenian curse from the mid-3rd century AD, actually using the language of paralysis (παραλελυμμένη; cf. Lk 5:18, 24; Acts 8:7; 9:33; Heb 12:12) asks Mighty Typhon[26] to harm τὴν ἰσχύν, τὴν [δύνα]|μιν, τοὺς τόνους, τὰ νεῦρα, τὴν ψυχήν, τὴν [--- τ]ὰ μέλη πάν[τα ... ('strength, power, tendons, sinews, soul,[27] ---, all

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22 Runia, 38–57, assesses the influence of Plato and of the Timaeus in particular, in the period up to Philo.

23 Runia, 49.

24 Runia, 57.

25 For example, since the idea of the body as the 'fetters of the soul' enjoyed lasting influence (e.g. Sen. *ad Helv.* 11.7) it seems reasonable to suppose that the related anatomical /physiological ideas also endured.

26 For this underworld figure, see van Henten, 1657–1662.

27 I have changed Jordan's 'capacity, sinews, muscles, breath'. Ὁ τένων was a species of νεῦρον, according to Galen (2.739; cf. 6.772). I have rendered the other words in conformity with the Platonic anatomy, already outlined, according to which 'muscles' is a more suitable rendering of σάρξ than τὰ νεῦρα. The particular word for muscle was μῦς (Hipp. *Art* 10; Arist. *Pr.* 885ª37; Theoc. 22.48), although the words for sinew did service as well.

members') of one, Tyche. After instructing him to 'Bind, twist --- the strength, the capacity, ---, the joints, make her lungs disappear' the tablet follows the common practice of comparing the names written on the lead with the desired result for the victim:

> As I have written down these names and they grow cold (καταψύχεται), so, too, let the body and the flesh and the sinews and the bones ([αἱ σ]άρκες καὶ τὰ νεῦρα καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ) and the members and the bowels of Tyche, whom Sophia bore, grow cold, that she may no longer rise up, walk around, talk, move about, but let her remain a corpse (μέ|νῃ νεκρά) pale, weak, paralysed, chilled until I am taken out of the dark air, rather let her grow exhausted and weak until she dies.
>
> (AthAg**App**)

This curse not only illustrates the nature of paralysis, but that it was regarded as a preliminary stage towards death, for the *defigens* wishes that 'she may no longer rise up ... but remain a corpse ... until she dies'. It is a useful starting-point for discussion, firstly, because it actually uses the language of paralysis; secondly, because it uses the language of binding; thirdly, because it uses the language of 'chilling'.[28]

The language of paralysis is not often used in the curse tablets, yet they have a special affinity with the condition. Their Greek name, καταδεσμοι 'binding charms', deriving from the frequently used cognate verb καταδέω, contains the notion of immobilising the victims,[29] as does paralysis. Sometimes this is explicit, as in curses against ὁρμή, 'movement, motion' (DT**234; 235; 237; 238; 239; 240; 241**), and it was also expressed by the use of 'voodoo dolls',[30] several examples of which have survived in lead, bronze and terracotta,[31] but they were also fashioned out of less durable material,[32] like wax (cf. SGD**152, 153, 155, 156**; cf. PGM IV.296–335;[33] Gager, figs. 3, 11, 13, 14, 17, 23; cf. Pl. *Leg.* 933a–c; Theoc. *Id.* 2.28–29; Verg. *Ecl.*

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28 A feature of the AthAg tablets (1st–3rd AD), see Jordan (1985a).

29 Cf. Bravo, 191.

30 See Faraone (1991b) for discussion and catalogue. Gager**107, 108** has sixteen found in Palestine (2nd AD). Pictures of bound figures are also drawn on some tablets, cf. Carthage**3**.

31 See DT**200–207**; Solin, **33**.

32 Faraone (1991a), 7.

33 Cf. Jordan (1988a), 246–247.

8.75–80; Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.30–33, *Epod.* 17.76). One such figure (4th BC) is inscribed with a curse illustrating that the rationale for such figures lies in a sympathetic relationship with the spells they bear:

> I register Isias, ... Restrain her by your side! I bind (καταδεσμεύω) Isias before Hermes the Restrainer, the hands, the feet of Isias, the entire body.
>
> (SGD**64**)[34]

Thus, despite the fact that the actual παραλυ- vocabulary is rare, paralysis was an important goal in malicious magic, for the magical curses sought to bind their victims, in order to immobilise them in some way.

The desire to 'chill' the victim (καταψύχω), also has a peculiar association with paralysis, gaining extra force through sympathetic associations with the cold lead of the tablet, or the well, or the corpse. According to Theophrastus' Περὶ παράλυσεως (4th–3rd BC), the commonly given reason for the condition was 'chilling':[35]

> Since they say paralysis arises from chilling (ὑπὸ καταψύξεως), as appears to be the common report, ...
>
> (Thphr. *De nerv. res.* 11.1)

Some say it is from too much 'air' (i.e. in the blood), and others by being deprived of 'air', for it is the 'air' that supplies both the heat and motion, and when the air is cut off, paralysis is associated with the chilling of the blood, or 'of the moisture' (τῆς ὑγρότητος). This understanding of paralysis probably undergirds Dioscorides' (1st AD) prescription of drugs with 'calorific', or 'heat-producing power' for its treatment (Dsc. 1.6). Thus, the desire to 'chill' (AthAg series; DT**155**=Gager**13** [4th AD]) a victim was tantamount to a wish for their paralysis.

Curses against bodily parts are well represented across several centuries straddling the New Testament period (SGD**3** [5th/4th BC]; **51** [4th BC]; **11** [late 4th

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34 Translation: Faraone (1991a), 3. Cf. Sophronius' *Narratio Miraculorum Sanctorum Cyri et Joannis* DT, cxxii–iii, translation Gager**165**), although late (6th AD), it is the only detailed narrative of a person's escape from a binding spell which illustrates that the underlying assumptions about the paralysing but nonfatal effects of voodoo dolls were common knowledge, at least in the early Byzantine period, Faraone (1991a), 9.

35 Pl. *Ti.* 46D talks of the 'auxiliary causes' of disease being 'cooling and heating, solidifying and dissolving' (ψύχοντα καὶ θερμαίνοντα πηγυόντα τε καὶ διαχέοντα).

BC]; **69** [4th/3rd BC]; **109** [?2nd BC]; Fox = Gager**134** [1st BC];[36] DT**74, 75a** [2nd AD]; SGD**164** [4th AD]). They may speak generally of the limbs (τὰ μέλη: DT**38; 51; 241; 242**; AthAg**App**), or itemise their various parts, as in a curse stemming from commercial rivalry which binds several people: 'I bind the soul, the work, the hands, and the feet; ...' (DTA**87** = Gager**62** [4th BC]; cf. SGD**150** [3rd BC]). Such body-part curses were particularly relevant in athletic rivalry,[37] such as the request to bind the 'sinews and members', in fact, all 365!

> 'Bind, bind | down the sinews, the members, the mind, the wits, | the intellect, the three hundred sixty-five | members.'
>
> (SuppMag**53** = Gager**8**[38] [4th AD])

In Audollent's collection (=DT) alone, there are many curses seeking to damage the manifold parts of the leg: τὰ ἰσχία, 'hips, hip joints' (**42b**), οἱ μηροί 'thighs, leg bones' (**42b; 74**; cf. **135a** *femus*); or τὰ σκέλη 'leg from hip down, ham' (**239; 240; 241**; cf. *crus*, **135a; 135b; 190**); τὰ ἄρθρα 'joints' (**242**); οἱ πόδες 'the feet' (**15; 47; 49; 50; 64; 66; 77; 85a; 156; 234; 235; 236; 237; 238; 239; 240; 285**); ἄκρα ποδῶν δακτύλους 'the toes (at the end of the feet)' (**42b**); πτέρναι 'heels, feet' (**42b**); τὰ σφυρά 'ankles' (**15**). Curses against the tendons appear to be rare, although there is one from the 5–6th BC (... ἐνγράφω τâι τένον; SGD**99**), and the desire that the victim becomes ἄτονος could be overtranslated 'tendon-less' (AthAg**3**), cf. ἀπόδους 'without the use of their feet'[39] (DT**159, 160, 167**).

There is little to suggest a 'nerve' paralysis. Although two curses seek to harm the αἴσθησις, its presence in a string of words relating to the mind suggests it should be rendered 'perception' (DT**41a; 242**) rather than 'sensation'. A couple of curses

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36 The oldest Latin defixio from Spain (late 1st BC) also curses body parts, Corell. Williams and Zerves, 31 reports the discovery of MF-1986-44, which Jordan reads as a curse listing bodily parts from head to toe (n.31), and compares with DT**74** & **75**, AthAg**IL1722**, MF-69-144, against an athlete, and SEG XXX.353 against a lover.

37 Jordan (1985a), 214, lists some against a *venatore* (2nd or 3rd AD), runners (4th AD), and athletes and wrestlers (late Roman [1st–3rd AD]). Some eighty curses against athletes have been recovered, Jordan (1994a) 117.

38 His translation ignores τὰ μέλη.

39 So Jordan (1988b) 130.

from the 3rd century AD seek after ἀcθέν(ϵ)ια 'weakness' (Carthage**1.15**; (Jordan 1994a) **5**; (Jordan 1996) **2**), cf. the protective charms against it (GMPT CXXI=Gager**128** [3rd/4th AD]).

Given their importance in sustaining life, it is not surprising that the sinews (τὰ νϵῦρα) are attacked in vindictive magic. Such attacks are especially frequent in curses against charioteers — and their horses. Sometimes the agent is asked to 'de-sinew' (ἐκνεύρωσον) them (e.g. DT**234**; **237**; **238**; **239**; **240**); other times the curse is against the charioteer's 'every limb and every sinew' (πᾶν μέλος καὶ πᾶν νεῦρον; DT**241** =Gager**12** [1st–3rd AD]); or it aims at 'the limbs, the sinews (τὰ νεῦρα), ... heart, mind, wits ... the whole of the limbs and sinews,' (Carthage**1** [mid 3rd AD]; cf. also DT**242**.50ff = Gager**10**; MGP**4**.30–33 = SGD**167**).

But the sinews are attacked in other contexts as well, such as in the such as curse against a thief and those who had knowledge of the theft,[40] which curses the thief's brain, soul, sinews, and hands, before cursing him inclusively from head to toenails (SGD**58**B [1st BC/1st AD]).[41] The sinews were attacked in the curse of the pantomimers (DT**15** = Gager**4** [3rd AD]), as they are in the erotic charm from the same time concerning two men, in which one is handed over to the 'untimely dead' (ἀώροις) '... in order that you will melt his flesh, sinews, members, soul' (DT**38** = SuppMag **54**.22f.; also MGP**2**).

There are also several curses which go the next anatomical step by cursing the marrow. Along with the (finger?)nails, the eyes (?), and the feet, a fragmentary text apparently curses the spine, the home of the marrow (SGD**80** [n.d.]). Another fragmentary tablet (?4th AD) aims at the marrow, along with the other components so essential to the body's health in the Platonic schema:

> O maidens, many-named maidens, damage and seize the soul, the heart, the innards, the marrows[42] and the sinews and the flesh (τοὺς μοιαλοὺς

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40 Cf. SGD**21** (1st BC).

41 I have changed Jordan's rendering of νεῦρα as 'muscles'. For text, see Bruneau.

42 The plural may recall the two types of marrow, enclosing the two types of soul, cf. Pl. *Ti.* 73D.

> [for μυ-] καὶ τὰ νεῦρα καὶ τὰς σάρκας) of Akilatos, born of Akesamater, now, now, quickly, quickly.
>
> (SGD131)

Another from the same period also attacks these important substances, adding the bones as well, to conform the text exactly to the anatomy of the *Timaeus*:

> καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ ὀστέα καὶ τοὺς μυαλοὺς καὶ τ[ὰ]|
> νεῦρα καὶ τὰς σάρκας καὶ τὴν δύναμιν Καρδήλου ...
>
> ... and the soul and the bones and the marrow and th[e] |
> sinews and the flesh and the power of Kardelos ...
>
> (DT155b.13f.)

The same curse also introduces the notion of chilling the victim:

> καταψύξητε τ[ὴ]ν ἰσ|
> [χὺν] τοὺς μυαλοὺς [τὰ νεῦρα] τὰς σάρκας τὴ[ν δύναμιν, ἐν] | ἡλικία Κάρδηλον
>
> chill the strength, the marrows, the sinews, the flesh, the power, in the prime of life (for) Kardelos ...
>
> (DT155b.24–26)[43]

These malevolent curses aiming at paralysis certainly intended to cause damage and suffering, but, since they even went so far as attacking the bodily parts so close to the source of life, they were also aiming to kill. In this context, an attack of paralysis would evoke the fear that it had a magical cause and that the curser wished to kill.

2.3.3 Paralysis and the Dead

Such curses bring the victim under the shadow of death, not only because they bring an illness which is taking them towards the grave, or, bringing the presence of death into their body, but also because magical practice operated by the agency of the dead. This was how magic in general and the curse tablets in particular operated (cf. PGM V.304–69; VII.429–58). Even though it may not always be explicit, there are sufficient numbers of tablets in which the connection with the dead is clear. So, e.g., a Latin curse against charioteers addresses an unknown *nekydaimon* and asks for the rival drivers to be killed and mangled so that they do not breathe again. In order to

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43 Cf. AthAg**App**. A Syriac charm apparently also expels the spirit of lunacy 'from the bones, the sinews, the flesh, the skin and the hair' (Thompson 1, xl [n. d.]).

prevail upon the corpse-daimon, the curser charges him by 'the one who set you free in his time, the god of the sea and the air' (DT**286**=Grant, 241). This phrase reflects the belief that the actual instrument by which the magician worked was the ghost, but this ghost had to be released from the underworld (and/or threatened!) by a higher power. Sometimes it is put from the opposite direction, as in the curse which binds the god who has given the corpse 'the gift of sleep and freed you from the chains of life', presumably so that the unknown *nekydaimon* may then be sent back into active service for the curser (DT**242**.30f. = Gager**10**). In other words, these curses against the charioteers are designed to kill[44] by enlisting the powers of the dead.

The spirit of a dead person is directly addressed as the agent in several curses against the sinews (DT**242** = Gager**10** [3rd AD]; DT**155b** = Gager**13** [4th AD]), or to bind and chill (AthAg**12**). In addition DT**155b** mentions some πάρεδροι (l.20), i.e. ghostly assistants, and a garbled phrase 'who live in this place'[45] which locates the invoked powers in the cemetery. DT**38**=SuppMag**54** (3rd AD) calls upon δαίμονες οἵ ἐν [τ]ούτω τῶ τόπω ἐστέ (l.19), and then hands the victim over to the untimely dead (ἀώροις, l. 22) in order to inflict the damage (ll.22ff, see above). The voodoo dolls which depict being bound (?paralysis) so vividly were probably also prepared for use by invoking Helios (435ff.) to arouse an unnamed *nekydaimon* from the cemetery (PGM IV.335–406).

Even the curses against horses could use a corpse for sympathetic magical purposes, 'Let him perish and fall, just as you lie (here) prematurely dead' (DT**295** = Gager**11**),[46] or invoke an unknown νεκυδαίμων ἄωρος (DT**234, 235, 237** = Gager**9, 238, 239, 240** [1st AD]). Even when there is no specific mention of a ghost when the charioteer is cursed along with his horses (e.g. DT**241**=Gager**12**), the

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44 Cf. DT**228A**, Grant, 242; DT**129**, Grant, 242; DT**155A**.

45 See Gager, 70 n.96.

46 The curse is Latin but the latter two words translate the Greek βίος θάνατος. Gager's translation follows a suggestion of D.R. Jordan (see p.65 n.70), which evidently takes βίος as βίας.

similarities with other spells, and the specific mention of the use of corpse in others suggests that a ghost is assumed here as well.

2.4 Paralysis and the Shadow of Death

Given the above, the paralytic was well and truly under the shadow of death. Paralysis was a condition from which people died. With his sinews loosened, death had already invaded his body. His condition could be under suspicion of being due to magical cursing, which would mean that somebody out there was using the dead to make him one of the dead. When Jesus 'raised' this man from his mat, Mark's vocabulary choice is significant (ἐγείρω): here was another example of someone who had been brought out from the shadow of death; he had been raised.

9. Forgiveness Enfleshed (2:13–28)

After opening with the call of Levi (2:13f.), the second sub-section shows Jesus modelling the forgiveness he has brought to the land by eating with sinners. In answering the scribal complaints, he likened the sick (οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες) to sinners (ἁμαρτωλούς), and himself to a physician treating the sick (2:17) in order to summarise the goal of his ministry. This metaphorical meaning needs to be born in mind when any of the healing stories are being read. The last healing story explicitly connected forgiveness of sins with healing (2:1–12), and, as the story unfolds, there will be other miracles whose metaphorical meaning is made explicit by the story (3:4). But even when it is not explicit, Jesus' use of this metaphor in general connection with his ministry prepares the reader to watch/listen to the healing stories at more than a surface level, in order to discern the overtones which speak of Jesus' call to sinners.

As the controversy with his opponents continues, he likens the time when he is present with his disciples to a wedding feast, but hints that he will be snatched away (2:20); he insists that he brings something new (2:21f., cf. 1:27), and he claims that the Son of Man — already introduced as the one who brings forgiveness to the land — is Lord of the Sabbath, which was made for the good of human beings (2:23–28).

9. Suppliant #5: Life Instead of Death (3:1–6)

This scene is especially important for the understanding Mark's healing stories in this thesis, for it explicitly provides a metaphorical overlay in which the healing is understood as a movement from death to life. Once again, the disciples are absent,[1] and the readers are aligned with a suppliant.

1 Text to Reader: Life on the Sabbath

When Jesus enters the synagogue again (πάλιν, v.1), it recalls the events of the Capernaum synagogue (cf. 1:21–28) and raises expectations that something similar may occur. The scene is focalised through another suppliant, characterised by his circumstances of need: he has 'a dried out hand' (ἐξηραμμένην τὴν χεῖρα, v.1b). The readers learn the necessary background information that some people were watching Jesus to see whether he healed this man on the Sabbath — presumably the same opponents as previously, i.e. the scribes (2:6, 16) and the Pharisees (2:?18, 24). They have evidently made a decision about Jesus, for they seek a legal accusation against him (ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ). Jesus' opposition to the scribes (1:22) has grown to such an extent that they are watching for a chance to remove him. Thus, from the beginning of the scene, this group is characterised negatively which places distance between them and the readers.

The man's healing occurs in three movements: Firstly, Jesus commands the man, 'rise (ἔγειρε) into the midst', making him the centre of attention in the scene and for the readers. Secondly, Jesus questions his opponents (v.4). This is in direct speech, so the readers hear it for themselves and the question causes them to ponder an answer. It provides a metaphorical overlay to this illness and its cure, using two sets of contrasts. To heal the man is to do good, in fact to 'save a life' (ψυχὴν σῶσαι), whereas to leave the man unhealed is to do evil, in fact, to kill (ἀποκτεῖναι). Not to cure the man would

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1 Fowler, 101, 'and so we cannot use them as role models, even if we wanted to'.

be to leave the man in a state of death; curing him, on the other hand, would be to save his life.

The answer to the puzzle is quite obvious. The readers have already seen Jesus heal on the Sabbath (1:29–31; cf. 1:21–28). They know that he is the Lord of the Sabbath and that the Sabbath was meant for human good (2:28). They recognise the 'counter-trap' in Jesus' question: the opponents will have to say 'to kill' if they wish to prevent him from doing the good that is entirely appropriate on this day. Instead, they are silent (v.4b), refusing to choose life over death. Their silence is permission for Jesus to give life, which begins the third movement, the actual healing. Before it is narrated, the readers are focalised through Jesus (περιβλεψάμενος) and given two views inside him revealing the emotions aroused by their silence (v.5): he looked with anger (μετ' ὀργῆς), and he was deeply saddened (συλλυπούμενος)[2] at their hardness of heart. Once before, Jesus was so willing to heal that he was angered by the mere suggestion to the contrary (1:41), now he is angered and grieved by these men who would prefer him to 'kill' rather than bring life on the Sabbath.

This also provides the second of two views into the opponents (cf. v.2) which both characterise them negatively. These inside views enable the readers to have the closest possible look at the motivations/thoughts of Jesus' enemies (cf. 2:6f.), while at the same time, the negatively evaluated revelation of their insides repels the readers from them. The readers firstly see a preference for 'death' and a desire to trap Jesus for 'saving life' (v.2), and then understand that this springs from a hardness of heart[3] which makes Jesus angry and deeply saddened.

There are no peons of praise as a result of this healing (contrast 1:27f.; 2:12) and no gathering crowds (cf. 1:32–34, 37; 1:45). Instead, the opponents — who are now identified as Pharisees —, having gained the evidence they were after, leave the

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2 συλλυπόμαι is a rare word, usually 'to mourn with', 'to sympathise', and this is apparently the only instance of the preposition having an intensifying force; cf. Cranfield.

3 Interestingly, D it syr^{s} replace πώρωσις, with νέκρωσις.

synagogue and immediately, along with the Herodians, 'gave counsel against him in order that they might destroy him' (v.6).

The contrast between Jesus' actions and those of the Pharisees reinforces the metaphorical overtones of the scene. Rather than kill on the Sabbath, Jesus 'saves life'. Because the Pharisees would have preferred him to leave the dead alone, they plan to destroy him. They find their reason to condemn him (cf. v.2) and, although they refused to answer his question with their lips, they demonstrate their answer with their actions. They may have legal scruples over him healing on the Sabbath, but not about planning to kill a man on the same day. Jesus used the Sabbath to save a life; they use it to kill.

After those of Jesus (1:11; cf. 17, 24) and the disciples (1:17), this is the last of the three commissionings generating the plot. The gradually escalating conflict between Jesus and the opponents (1:22; 2:6ff.; 2:16; 2:18; 2:24) has reached a climax in their plan to kill him and this now becomes their narrative assignment. From this point on, their scheme to kill Jesus casts a dark shadow across the narrative, for it 'immediately raises the question of whether and how this intention will be realized.'[4] This scene puts irrevocable distance between the readers and the opponents, who can never be regarded positively again.

However, although the scene is important for the generation of the conflict which helps to sustain the plot, the suppliant is not subordinated to a secondary position. The man's need was not merely the occasion for discussing Jesus' conflict with the opponents,[5] as if Jesus 'saving his life' was an insignificant matter. Both elements are integral to the scene and an explanation must attempt to account for its complete dynamics. The 'great ones' (Pharisees) are prepared to use the needy person simply as an opportunity to further their purposes. They are so prepared to maintain his state of 'death', that they will kill in the process. Human need is simply confirmed by their system of law. On the other hand, Jesus cannot confirm the needy person in his state of

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4 Tannehill (1980) 66; cf. Williams, 28.

5 Cf. Williams, 102.

death: he is prepared to die himself in order to bring life. Jesus was angered at the kind of hard-heartedness that would kill rather than give life and which would go to any length to prevent him from doing so. But he would not let that stop him.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 A Withered Hand and Death

2.1.1 'Metaphorical' Death

In one sense, there is no need for a detailed assessment of ancient views on withered hands, for the text itself explicitly provides a metaphorical understanding of the condition as a 'death' and its cure as the saving of a life. An understanding of the ancient views, however, shows that this metaphorical dimension is not simply an arbitrary overlay.

2.1.2 Paralysis and Death

There is no need to repeat the discussion on paralysis, apart from indicating that it is of relevance here. Insofar as the hand was paralysed, it would be understood as a loosening of the sinews (cf. TSol 18:11) and so as a serious condition in which death had already invaded the body.

2.1.3 Withering and Death

The new feature of the story is in the description of the hand as withered, or 'dried out' (ἐξηραμμένη, v.1; ξηρά, v.3). As we have seen, moistness and dryness were important philosophical concepts with implications for medicine. As with other opposites, it was important to keep the balance between the two (cf. Hipp. *Morb.sacr.* 17). Moisture nourishes the all important marrow (Pl. *Ti.* 77C),[6] but too much drying of the body leads to death (88D). Amongst Plato's first class of disease (problems with the elements), he lists the problem when 'particles that formerly were being cooled become heated, and the dry presently become moist, and the light heavy' (82B). When a hand is dried up, as here, something has gone seriously wrong, and, if possessing

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6 Given the importance of the spinal marrow as the 'bonds of the (mortal) soul' it is not surprising that it was regarded as a severe disease (ὁ νοῦσος χαλεπή) when it 'becomes dry' (αὐαίνηται) (Hipp. *Int.Aff.* 3).

the appropriate moisture was to be healthy and full of life, then a dried out limb is dead (cf. Hippocrates' saying in Aret. *De causis* 1.7.2).

These opposites also had importance in regard to the state of the soul in the afterlife, at least according to the Pythagorean schema. In the eschatological myth of Plutarch's *De sera numinis vindicta*, the moister the soul, the more fitting it is for the body (566A; cf. 1053B–C; Pl. *Resp.* 411B),[7] whereas the dry soul is prepared for the life above.[8] The myth suggests that the Dionysian mysteries 'liquefy' the soul and put it at risk of being reincarnated; cf. the 'Stele of Jeu the hieroglyphist in his letter' which also links the mysteries ('celebrated by Israel'!), with the revelation of 'the moist and the dry and all nourishment' (PGM V.108–117). Once again, this underlines the point that moisture is the natural state of bodily life, and so, as with a case of paralysis, a dry state is already heading for death.

On this understanding of the body, Jesus is not speaking metaphorically at all. Although a withered hand might seem to be a long way from death for the modern reader, this was not the case in Mark's day. The body of this man in the synagogue had already been invaded by death, and, as Jesus pointed out, to leave him uncured is tantamount to killing, whereas to cure, is to 'save a life'.

2.2 A Withered Hand and the Dead

In the examination of paralysis, we have already seen that many curse tablets are directed at the body parts, including the limbs. Hands also received particular attention (4th BC: DTA**87** = Gager**62**; SGD**64**; 3rd BC: SGD**150**; 1st BC/1st AD: SGD**58B**; cf. SGD**21** [1st BC]; 3rd AD: DT**15** = Gager**4**; 4th AD: MGP**4** [= SGD**167**]; cf. 6th AD: Sophronius, *Narratio Miraculorum Sanctorum Cyri et Joannis*).[9]

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7 See further, Vernière.

8 It is a little more confusing in Heraclitus, who, although teaching that 'a dry soul is wisest and best' (fr. 74; from Plut. *Rom.* 28; Stob. 5.120; and Plut. *De esu carn.* 1.6 995E; *De defectu.* 41; Pl. *Phd* 73), apparently also said that 'it is delight for souls to become moist' (fr. 72). The latter saying may be explained, with the editor of the fragments, in terms of the soul in this world, 'perhaps because the change to moisture means death, and the rest of death is pleasant', i.e. the soul would find release.

9 DT, cxxii–iii; translation: Gager**165**.

In addition, Audollent's collection contains curse tablets attempting to bind various other parts of the arm: ὠμοί 'upper arms, shoulders' **74; 242**; the βραχίονες, 'arms, shoulders': **74; 156**, cf. brac(h)ia 'arm': **135ab; 190**; οἱ ἀνκῶνες 'the elbows, arms': **242**); δάκτυλοι 'fingers': **42b**, cf. diciti (=digiti): **135ab; 190**; καρπός 'wrist', **252; 253; 242**. Curses against αἱ χεῖρες 'the hands' themselves are particularly well-represented (in addition to those already cited above: DT**47; 49; 50; 64; 85a; 156; 234; 235; 237; 238; 239; 240; 241**). There are also curses against the hand as a symbol of power, strength, and so ability: cf. SGD**106** (5th BC). An Aramaic bowl inflicts 'dryness', although to the legs, as a preliminary to death, asking 'that his legs may dry', as well as 'that he might die' (N-S **Bowl 9**). Sepher ha-Razim (2.95ff) clearly shows that such dryness was under suspicion of a *daimonic* cause, when it provides a spell 'to heal a man with stroke and half of him has dried up, either by a spirit or by witchcraft.'

Once again, the point needs to be made that, since magic enlisted the dead as the agents of the curse — both generally, and also for curses against hands (e.g. DT**234–240**) —, then a case of a withered hand would be suspected of being caused by a magical — and so *daimonic* — attack, in which the forces of the dead bring death into a living person's body. When Jesus asked this man to stretch out his hand, not only is he removing the influence of death from him, but he is removing him from under the influence of the dead. He chooses not to kill, but to bring life.

2.3 Withered Hand and the Imperial Power

In AD 69, while blockading Alexandria, Vespasian received a visit from a man with a withered hand, who had been told by Asklepios to ask the Roman general to step on his hand to cure it. Ascertaining from his doctors that it was curable, Vespasian did so, and the man was cured to the future emperor's greater glory (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81).

This story indicates that at roughly the same time as Mark was being read, the tendency for (would-be) emperors to approximate divinity was on the increase, especially in somewhere like Alexandria. Vespasian had performed a cure which the healing gods had apparently deferred to him.

2.4 Life to the Dead

In Mark's story, Jesus showed no reluctance at all, nor did he take medical advice, or act for the sake of better publicity — in fact, it was a choice which would lead to his death. He simply called upon the man to stretch out the hand, and, when he did so, it was restored. Jesus had brought life to one who had been living under the shadow of death and under the influence of the dead. As a result, that shadow now falls across his own future. He is prepared to die himself, in order to bring life to the dead.

1d. The Call of the Twelve (3:7–19)

At the opening of the third sub-section, the previous pattern of events by the sea (v.7, cf. 1:16; 2:13) raises the expectation that another calling may soon occur. Jesus and his disciples are accompanied by a vast multitude from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, across the Jordan, and the regions around Tyre and Sidon (7b–8a). They were coming to Jesus as they heard of the things that he was doing (8b).

This scene is filled with graphic language, conveying the forceful — even violent — nature of the events. Jesus ensured that a little boat 'might stay with him' (προσκαρτερῇ αὐτῷ), lest the crowd crush him (ἵνα μὴ θλίβωσιν αὐτόν). The reason for his fear is explained (v.10) by the fact that he had healed many, 'with the result that' (ὥστε ...) the multitude, presumably, 'were attacking him' (ἐπιπίπτειν αὐτῷ) in order that he might touch as many as had afflictions. The attack was not simply from the living human beings, but the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, 'were assaulting him' (προσέπιπτον αὐτῷ) and crying out saying 'You are the son of God'.[10] Mark provides the reader with an 'inside view',[11] revealing Jesus' desire to

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10 Although προσπίπτω τινί can mean 'to fall down at one's feet' (LSJ, item III), the violence conveyed by the use of θλίβω and ἐπιπίπτω in preceding verse encourages a translation here drawn from the other end of its semantic range (LSJ, item I).

11 Missed by Fowler and Boomershine (1974) whose classification of inside views ignores 'desires and intentions'.

keep the lid on what was happening: he insistently rebuked (πολλὰ ἐπετίμα) them 'lest they make him manifest'.[12]

Then, in the call of the twelve, comes the call expected from the beginning of the sub-section. It is all the more significant now that it has been delayed, for it reads as a solution to the problem of the pressing crowds. Jesus designates twelve (v.13) 'to be with him in order that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out the *daimons*' (v.14f.). These men are named and numbered (vv.16–19), indicating the closure of the group. In final position, Judas' supplement brings an ominous note to the narrative; he was ὃς καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτόν. The reader is now aware both of the plot to kill Jesus set in motion by the Pharisees and the Herodians (3:6), and of the means by which this will be realised: through the betrayal of one of these twelve men who are designated to be the closest of all to him (3:19). The shadow of his betrayal and death is rapidly falling across the narrative.

11. Jesus' Source of Authority (3:20–35)

1. The Quest

In the opening segment of Mark's first intercalation, or 'sandwich',[13] Jesus' family seek to bring him home, thinking he has gone mad (3:20f.).

2. The Accusation

In the middle section, he engages in controversy with the scribes from Jerusalem (vv.22–30), who were saying 'that he has Beelzeboul, and that by the ruler of *daimons* he is casting out *daimons*' (3:22). This being, who Jesus is supposed to 'have', is named and then given the function 'ruler of *daimons*'. Later, Mark domesticates Beelzeboul to the narrative by describing him in familiar terms, 'unclean spirit' (v.30).

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12 The clause is regarded as 'probably final' by Taylor.

13 For Mark's well-known use of intercalations, or 'sandwiches'; cf. Edwards; Shepherd (1991); Shepherd (1993). For their function as implicit commentary see Fowler, 143f.

This is probably an accusation that Jesus was practising magic.[14] The magicians operated by gaining control of a *daimon*, by 'having' them under their authority, and Jesus is being accused of having one with a most important function.

3. Beelzeboul, Prince of Daimons

3.1 Beelzeboul

The usual interpretations of the expression concentrate on the name, rather than the functional description. Because it is unattested apart from the Gospels and the later TSol,[15] interpreters propose various etymological solutions.[16] The recent suggestion that Beelzebub be read in an Aramaic incantation from Qumran (4Q560: דבב[בעל, Beel]zebub),[17] although possible, is far from certain, since it is a reconstruction and one which depends upon an etymological connection with the Aramaic expression 'to be an enemy, adversary' (דבב), which has not convinced many.[18]

3.2 The Prince of the *Daimons*

In terms of its function in Mark's narrative, the explanatory expression is the more significant. Mark uses Beelzeboul but once, but the *daimons* of which he is prince are constantly before the readers' gaze. The name was almost certainly unfamiliar to the Greco-Roman readers, but the *daimons* were not. It therefore seems good sense to allow the familiar phrase to interpret the unfamiliar name.

Greco-Roman readers may have recognised the link between Beelzeboul and the Semitic name for a lord, or god 'Baʿal'.[19] This Semitic flavour — being foreign and oriental — in connection with the *daimons* provides a magical atmosphere. The magical

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14 So Kraeling; Smith (1978), 32ff. Cf. the later tendency for the Jews — probably reacting to the Gospel tradition, Meier, 97 — to explain Jesus' miracles as sorcery; cf. *bSanh* 43a; Justin's Jew, *Dial.* 69.

15 He appears frequently in TSol.

16 For the various interpretations, see Lewis; Herrmann.

17 Penney and Wise.

18 Lewis, 639; Herrmann, 294.

19 The name, as Βηλ, occurs only rarely in magic; cf. PGM IV.1010; Jordan (1994a) **5** and 120 n.17; PGM **O2**.7.

curses and spells delighted to use foreign words, strange sounding syllables,[20] different and unusual names of underworld beings, and the like. The accusation that Jesus was performing his exorcisms by the power of this being would be readily understood against the backdrop of magic, even if the name remained unfamiliar.

Beelzeboul's function, however, would not be unfamiliar. On the understanding that the *daimons* are the spirits of the dead, Beelzeboul is given the position of the 'Prince of the dead', the lord of the underworld. As such, the expression finds an abundance of analogies, both in literature and magic.

Some Semitic analogies can even be gleaned amongst the etymological approaches. In the Ugaritic epics, as well as being the ruler of the gods and of the earth,[21] Baʿal was also associated with the underworld through the defeat of Mot.[22] It has also been argued that Zeboul is related to the epithet *zbl bʿl arṣ*, meaning 'prince, lord of the underworld' and referring to a chthonic god able to help in cases of illness.[23] If so, then both portions of Beelzeboul's name connect him etymologically with the Lord of the underworld.

When Jesus reformulated the accusation for the purposes of his riddle (v.23), he introduced the figure of Satan (cf. 1:13; 3:23, 26; 4:15; 8:33). Although there is debate whether the OT presents 'Satan' as the same individual figure in each of the texts in which 'he' appears,[24] for our purposes it is enough to say that several of these texts associate him with death (Job 1–2; 1Chron 21; ?Zech 3). In the NT, the connection with the accuser (Satan or ὁ διάβολος) and death is also well-known (Jn 8:44, cf. 1Jn 3:12; Heb 2:14; 1Pet 5:8).[25]

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20 Cf. the observation that anyone not knowing Hebrew would take it as a name; for anyone knowing Hebrew it would be a stumbing block! Gaston, 250, which may explain the change to Beelzebub in Syr & Jerome.

21 For details, see Maclaurin, 158f.

22 Gibson, 81.

23 Cf. Herrmann, 295.

24 Breytenbach and Day.

25 This connection between Satan and death was recognised by the fathers, e.g. Origen identified the destroying angel of the Passover with Satan (*Princ.* 3.2.1; *cCels.* 6.43). Beelzeboul is called the prince of death in *Christ's Descent into Hell* (5th–6th century).

This identification also finds confirmation in the *Testament of Solomon*, the only other text in which Beelzeboul appears. Although he certainly receives further elaboration here, one of the roles ascribed to Beelzeboul is that of the one who binds people in Tartaros (TSol 6:3). He is also called 'the ruler of the spirits of the air and the earth and beneath the earth ...', which may also indicate his rulership over the dead, since these are all 'eschatological' spaces in which departed spirits can dwell (TSol 16:3).

Greek literature contains a wealth of analogies to Mark's phrase. The proem to the Orphic Hymns addresses 'O king of those under the earth' (καταχθονίων βασιλεῦ, *pr.*12). Hades is often called the 'king of the dead below' (ἄναξ ἐνέρων Ἀϊδωνεύς, *Il.* 20.61; cited in Lucian *Men.* 10; *Hymn to Demeter* 357); or 'ruler of the dead below' (ἐνέροισιν ἀνάσσων, *Il.* 15.188f.); the 'ruler of the departed' (καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσων, *Hymn to Demeter* 346); cf. inscriptions where he is god of the dead (Epigr.gr. 89.4; 26.9, 42.5 and 87.4). It is given to him (here Pluto) to rule the abyss (βασιλεύειν δὲ τοῦ χάσματος), and 'to rule those who have died' (ἄρχειν τῶν ἀποθανόντων, Lucian *Luc.* 2). Thanatos 'himself' — who is not often personified and never worshipped as a god — is also called 'king of corpses' (ἄναξ νεκρῶν, Eur. *Alc.* 843), and, in a phrase very close to Mk 3:22, he is also called 'the Lord of *daimons*' (ὁ κύριος δαιμόνων, *Alc.* 1040).

The magical literature has numerous underworld beings who can be manipulated to send up ghosts, although the picture is too complex to say that there is one who is *the* ruler of the shades below. The Aramaic bowl texts have a king of demons (Isbell **17**.5; **18**.4, 6; **19**.3; **20**.4, 7; **22**.2), who especially kills boys and girls, male and female foetuses (**19**.4; **20**.6,7). An ἀρχιδαίμων appears in PGM IV.1349, in which his πάρεδροι, i.e. his assistants, are invoked by the magician, and who are also called

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MacCulloch, 346, 234, argues that, although Origen and possibly Irenaeus, took the binding of the strong man to be the assault on Death and Hades, the fathers did not entertain the notion of Satan being the Lord of the underworld (pp.227, 229, 232f., 345–6). Huidekoper argues to the contrary.

'rulers of daimons' (δαιμονοτάκτας, 1374f.). Since the πάρεδροι are generally the δαίμονες of dead people,[26] this may suggest some kind of hierarchy in the underworld (cf. Plut. *Dion* 2). Osiris is also called the king of the underworld (e.g. PGM IV.10, in Old Coptic: ΠΕΡΟ ϞΤΗ ΠΝϦΒ etc. the king of embalming), and ?Anoubis is called ὁ κύριος τῶν χ<θ>ονίων ('the lord of the chthonians', PGM VIII.30). A still unpublished lead tablet in the Getty Museum also approximates Mk 3:22, when it invokes Bakacichych as 'Prince of *Daimons*' (ὁ τύραννος τῶν δαιμόνων).[27] The Cyprus tablets (DT**22–36** [3rd AD]) mention the king of the deaf daimons (βασιλεύς τῶν κωφῶν δεμόνων) and the lord of all the *daimons* under the ground (δέσποτα τῶν ὑπὸ χθόνα δεμόνων, **25**.12).

As time went on and the trend towards one universal god progressed, Helios took on an increasingly important role.[28] As the Lord of upper and lower worlds (PGM XXI; cf. XII.256) he was also the lord of the *daimons* of the dead. In this role, he was often petitioned at sunset at a graveyard, so that he might search for the *daimon* of the corpse, in order to send it up for the use of the magician (e.g. PGM IV.296–466).

3.3 The Releaser of Daimons

If Beelzeboul is identified as 'the Prince of *Daimons*', then he is being cast as the one who has the power to release or to restrain the *daimons* for magical ends in the upper world. Being the ruler of the *daimons* entails the receipt and release of the dead, whom, like Pluto,

> he receives, takes in charge, and retains in close custody, permitting nobody whatsoever to go back up above, except, in all time, a very few for most important reasons.
>
> (Lucian *Luc.* 2)

The ruler of the dead could send back the ghosts in his charge, so, for example, after Atossa's libation to Dareios, the chorus calls 'king of the dead, send forth to the light the soul from below' (βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων, | πέμψατ' ἔνερθεν ψυχὴν ἐς φῶς,

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26 Ciraolo, 284, 286.

27 Kotansky and Spier, 319.

28 Gordon.

Aesch. *Pers.* 629–630, cf. 649–651). Magic assumed that if he *could* do it, then he *would* do it, if rightly 'persuaded', e.g. the curse tablet which promises the dead person, by way of incentive, that the curser will 'bind the god who gave you rest' (DT**242** =Gager**10**), i.e. the one who sent him to the underworld, so that the ghost would be available to fulfil the magician's purposes.

4. Jesus and the Strong Man

The Greco-Roman readers would hear the scribes accusing Jesus of knowing magical secrets by which the prince of the underworld is bound so that the dead are temporarily released (cf. Lucian *Luc.* 2). Jesus' riddles present the scribes with an alternative explanation. The ruler of the underworld had to be persuaded in some way, i.e. 'bound' before the *daimons* could be released. The riddle suggests that he is binding the strong man in order to more permanently plunder his domain. It seems that he is planning, after all, to destroy the influence of the dead over the living (cf. 1:24).

Jesus warned the scribes against misunderstanding the nature of his authority. If they evaluate him incorrectly, they will be guilty of eternal sin (v.29), i.e. they will miss out on the forgiveness he brings. The readers cannot help but feel the strength of this warning, which stresses the crucial nature of the question regarding Jesus' identity.

5. The Resolve to Keep Going

The call from Jesus' family is a call to return home to where it all began (1:9). As such, it is a call for Jesus to leave the course upon which God has set him (1:11), and the calling which God has given him. When he looks at those around him and talks of those doing the will of God being his family, it should be primarily understood in terms of the implications for him, not for them. Since he is the one being called, his statement that he is staying with those who wish to do the will of God and not returning home is a choice to do the will of God. For him, this will apparently involve the plundering of the underworld.

The sandwich provides the readers with some distinct options for Jesus' identity and his authority. Is he mad, or is he doing the will of God? Is he manipulating the

daimons by their prince, or is he binding him in order to plunder the underworld on a more permanent basis?

12. Listening For The Kingdom (4:1–34)

Jesus' return to the location by the sea (4:1) introduces the 'parables discourse' as the climax to Mark's first main section. The well-established pattern erects the expectation of another calling. When it arrives it moves beyond the call of the disciples (1:16–20; 2:13f.; 3:13–19) to a general invitation issued to anyone who has ears to hear.

The parable of the soils is separated from its explanation by a quotation from Isaiah 6:9f., which plays a key role in the elucidation of the parable and of Jesus' ministry. In the Isaianic context, the hardening of Israel was only temporary, for the purposes of allowing God's judgement to fall (vv.11f.), and to provide the context for the gathering of God's remnant, the 'holy seed' (v.13). Jesus' use of this citation suggests that he finds himself amongst a hard-hearted Israel, with a similar task to Isaiah, to gather in the 'holy seed'.

As Jesus explains the parable of the soils, the emphasis falls upon the need to listen (vv.3, 9, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23f.) to the word being sown (v.14), presumably the gospel of God concerning the imminence of the kingdom (1:15). The key to becoming part of 'the harvest' is to hear the word of the kingdom with acceptance (v.20).

The parables of the kingdom set the eschatological horizon as still future to the story, teaching that the coming kingdom will arrive suddenly (vv.26–29), and when it does it will encompass the world, like the 'world-tree' of the prophets (vv.30–32; cf. Ezek 17; Dan 4).

By linking the image of the harvest, with the expectation of the coming kingdom, the two halves of the parables discourse are closely related, producing the combined effect that the key to entering the coming kingdom harvest is to hear the word of the kingdom with acceptance.

When Jesus introduced the Isaiah citation, he told those around him that they had been given the mystery of the kingdom. In a world in which the mystery cults promised a 'better hope' (Marcus, in Cicero, *Leg.* 2.14.36) through initiation, this language would be recognised as drawn from this conceptual pool. Jesus' 'better hope' is the kingdom of God which will come suddenly and encompass the world, and those around him had been given the 'mystery', i.e. the way in, to that kingdom. Initially, the readers are not fully aware of what this mystery is, which is perfectly in line with the usual secrecy surrounding such things. But then Jesus immediately opens the secret to 'anyone who has ears', as he explains that the key to entering the kingdom is to hear the word he is speaking, and accept it. This is the mystery that will take a person into the better hope of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 4: Jesus and the Perishing (4:35–8:26)

1. 'Master of Land and Sea'

1. Text to Reader

The second main section of Mark's narrative is broadly structured around three sea journeys (4:35ff.; 6:45ff.; 8:10ff.).[1] Each occasion in the boat is a significant moment towards the unfolding of Jesus' identity. Since the readers are privileged to share these moments of revelation, they develop a greater bond with Jesus and also a degree of sympathy with the disciples, even though their negative evaluation maintains some distance.

Since this section contains six of the thirteen suppliant passages, it plays a crucial role in making contact with Mark's readers.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 The Sea

Mark's use of θάλασσα in connection with lake Genessaret has evoked surprise from early days.[2] Porphyry's criticism of this feature (Mac. Mag. *Apoc.* 3.6, cf. 4) finds good precedent in Luke's more exact use of λίμνη in both his special material (Lk 5:1) and material drawn from Mark (8:22, 23, 33).[3] Like Josephus (who always uses λίμνη for Palestine's inland waters, including Gennesaret; e.g. *BJ* 2.573; 3.463), 1Maccabees (in which Gennesaret is τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ Γεννησάρ, 11:67), and the secular Greek writers (e.g. Homer, Herodotus), Luke appears to reserve θάλασσα for the Mediterranean.[4]

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1 Recognised by, e.g. Kelber, 30; Petersen, 194–196; van Iersel, 89–98; Williams, 45.

2 For discussion see Theißen (1985).

3 He retains only two of Mark's nineteen (17:1, 6).

4 Theißen (1985), 9–13.

There is little point in our correcting Mark's usage,[5] which may be explained in terms of its Semitic background, or of local practice.[6] Whatever the background, it remains true that the use of θάλασσα would more naturally evoke in the Greco-Roman readers something larger than an inland lake. The potential confusion is exacerbated by the fact that Mark only occasionally specifies which 'sea' is in view (1:16; 7:31), which raises the question whether Mark is using a studied ambiguity in order to enhance the impact of his message.

2.2 'Master of Land and Sea': The Emperor

The phrase 'land and sea' was enlisted in the rhetoric praising Augustus' achievements. Philo's *Embassy to Gaius* waxes lyrical on this theme, describing Augustus' entrance on the scene when Europe and Asia were 'waging grievous war all over sea and land, battling on either element'

> This is the Caesar who calmed the torrential storms on every side (ὁ τοὺς καταρράξαντας πανταχόθι χειμῶνας εὐδιάσας), who healed the pestilences common to Greeks and barbarians (ὁ τὰς κοινὰς νόσους Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων ἰασάμενος), [...] This is he who not only loosed but broke the chains which had shackled and pressed so hard on the habitable world (οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ τὰ δεσμά, οἷς κατέζευκτο καὶ ἐπεπίεστο ἡ οἰκουμένη, παραλύσας). This is he who exterminated wars [...] cleared the sea of pirate ships and filled it with merchant vessels. [...] reclaimed every state to liberty, who led disorder into order and brought gentle manners and harmony to all unsociable and brutish nations, [...] made a new Hellas and hellenized the outside world [...], the guardian of peace, [...]
>
> (Philo *Legat.* 143–147)

The phrase may have been part of the Roman self-image for a long time prior to Augustus, for, according to Plutarch, after Cato's victorious triumph, the people of Rome were filled 'with the proud feeling that it was able to master every land and sea' (Plut. *Cato Ma.* 14; cf. *Pomp.* 70.2–3). But with Augustus, it seemed as if they had achieved their destiny. His own law used the phrase to order the doors of Janus' temple closed 'whenever there was peace, secured by victory, throughout the whole domain of the Roman people on land and sea' (RG 13). Inscriptions praised Augustus as 'overseer of

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5 Cf. NRSV translating 'lake'.

6 Theißen (1985), 6–9, 21–24.

every land and sea' ([πάσης] γῆ[ς κ]αὶ θ[α]λάσσης [ἐ]π[όπ]τ[ην], Pergamum No. 381).[7] The Augustan poets added the phrase to their repertoire (cf. Vergil *Georgics* 1.24–35).

Just as other Augustan phraseology became the stock of imperial propaganda, so too, did this phrase. The conquest of Britain (AD 43) further enriched the phrase, since the island 'at the world's end' had fallen under Roman sway. Tacitus alludes to the phrase in a speech placed in the mouth of the Briton Calgacus. Britain faced an assault from 'these deadly Romans, whose arrogance you cannot escape by obedience and self-restraint. Robbers of the world, now that earth fails their all-devastating hands, they probe even the sea' (Tac. *Agric.* 30.3–4; 31.2.; cf. Aelius Arist. *Eulogy of Rome* 28). In his satire of the deification of Britain's conqueror, Seneca has Augustus cynically ask whether it was for the apotheosis of Claudius that he 'made peace by land and sea' (Sen. *Apoc.* 10). Mastery over land and sea is evidently an Augustan 'trait', to which his successors may aspire, but to which they may not be equal. Nero's coins championed the Augustan language (AD 64–65), showing the door of Janus closed and the inscription 'with peace obtained by land and sea he closed Janus by decree of the senate' (Small. **53** = Braund **247**), as did his bestowal of freedom and immunity from taxation: 'I reward your gods, whose constant care for me on land and sea I have enjoyed' (Small. **64** = Braund **261** [AD 67]; cf. Suet. *Nero* 24).

Given its role within the propaganda, it is understandable that the phrase was also used by the critics of the imperium. The rhetoric praised Augustus for 'filling the seas with merchant ships' (Philo *Legat.* 143–147); the critics used it to expose the insatiable gluttony of Rome for further conquest (Plut. *Pomp.* 70) and plunder. 'The conquering Roman now held the whole world, sea and land and the course of sun and moon. But he was not satisfied. Now the waters were stirred and troubled by his loaded ships...', (Petronius *Sat.* 119.1–3, cf. 4–18, 27–36; cf. Plut. *De fort. Rom.* 325D–E; cf. Aristides, *Eulogy of Rome* 11; Sen. *Ep.* 60.2, 89.22; cf. *ad Helv.* 10.2–7; *De vita beata* 11.4). For

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7 From Deissmann (1927, 347, fig. 64.

the mastery of Rome 'on land and sea' was achieved at great human cost. It was clear from the beginning that it came through war, destruction and violence, for it 'was peace, *secured by victory*, throughout the whole domain of the Roman people on land and sea' (RG 13, my italics). The mastery of the Pax Romana was 'the political goal of the Roman emperor and his most senior officials and [was] brought about and secured by military action through the success of his legions.'[8] As Tacitus had Calgacus say: 'To plunder, butcher, steal, these things they misname empire: they make a desolation and they call it peace' (Tac. *Agric*. 30.5).

One of the critics of Rome's 'belligerent policy leading to and maintaining the position of a world power and the urban luxury based on it'[9] sought to put things into perspective:

> Now o'er such wide seas are we tempest tossed; we seek out a foe and pile fresh war on war.
>
> (Propertius 3.5.10–12)

This came about through avarice and the one who goes after plunder in war is pursuing a vanity in the face of death:

> Yet no wealth shall you carry to the waves of Acheron: naked, you fool, you shall be borne to the ship of hell. There victor and vanquished shades are mingled in the equality of death.
>
> (Propertius 3.5.13–15).

2.3 'Master of Land and Sea': Jesus?

Since the use of sea and land is so prominent in Mark, can the journeys of Jesus be understood in the light of this well-known phraseology? As Jesus goes backwards and forwards across 'land and sea' he too shows his mastery, yet it has a different character to that of the emperor. Whereas Augustus' mastery over the storms was metaphorical, Jesus' is presented as real. Whereas the emperors' mastery of land and sea cost lives and brought plunder and death, Jesus' mastery leaves no trail of blood; on the contrary, wherever he finds death, his mastery is used to bring life.

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8 Wengst, 11. Cf. Ign. *Rom*. 5:1 (AD 117).

9 Wengst, 44.

2. Journey #1: The Question Raised, 'Do you not care that we are perishing?' (4:35–41)

In the previous section, Jesus rescued five people out from under the shadow of death; in the next series of scenes, beginning with the first sea journey, death is even more prominent[10] and Jesus' rescue even more powerful.

1. Text to Reader

The story asks three unanswered questions which continue to guide the reading of the narrative. The significance of two of them has often been recognised; but the importance of the third is generally overlooked. The Christological question ('who then is this?'; v.41) maintains the readers' interest in Jesus' identity. Since the question is not answered, it opens a gap in the discourse which forces the readers to seek for an answer. In this way, it guides the reader to think Christologically about the narrative to follow.

Jesus' question to the disciples ('Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have faith?'; v.40) functions in a similar fashion. While coupling their fear with their lack of faith, it also provides an expectation that this faith will come ('not yet'). This question guides the readers to watch to see if Jesus' analysis of the disciples' state is true, and/or to wait for faith to emerge.

The third question provides the context for the other two. Like them, it too remains unanswered and guides the reading of the next section of the narrative. It is a question about mortality ('Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'; v.38). This question reveals that their fearful lack of faith is focused by the prospect of their death. Since Jesus is surprised by the disciples' fear, it seems that they should have believed that he could do something about them perishing. Thus the three questions are integrally related.

At the discourse level, any question becomes that of the readers and these are no exception. As we have seen, unanswered questions are extremely powerful devices for

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10 The severity of the circumstances of people in this section is often acknowledged, e.g. Williams, 108; Fisher, 13f.

engaging the reader, since they make the story's questions the readers'. Here, the more the flesh-and-blood readers are aware of their own desperate fear of perishing, the more this question would become their own. Since the world of Mark's early readers was a perishing world, the heart-felt cry of the disciples would no doubt strike a chord with many readers and the questions would then encourage them to read on in search of answers to the Christological question, the faith question, and the mortality question. It is not surprising that the sequence of miracles which follow reveal something about Jesus and faith in the face of death.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Perishing at Sea

For Greco-Roman readers, Mark's use of the term θάλασσα would evoke images of Mediterranean sea travel. Although the emperor may have cleaned up the danger from pirates, sea travel had intrinsic dangers. Shipwreck was always a possibility ('Pity the shipwrecked, for navigation is unsure', PsPhoc. 25), since 'in a moment the sea is moved to its depths' (Sen. *Ep.* 4.8).

Death at sea was 'above others a cause for grief',[11] for, as Hesiod said, 'it is a terrible thing to die among the waves' (Hes. *Op.* 687). One of the major problems with drowning at sea was the forfeiture of a decent burial (*Od.* 5.308–312). The fear of drowning and not being properly buried — whether buried by strangers, if your body was found washed up on some foreign shore, or not buried at all, if your body was lost at sea — is expressed in the many surviving epitaphs from tombs erected for shipwrecked bodies buried by strangers and also from the many cenotaphs ('empty graves') erected for those lost at sea.[12] Without a proper burial, the shipwrecked person, being one of the ἄταφοι, also ran the risk of becoming a ghost, who would then be manipulated by magicians (cf. Apul. *Met.* 3.17, Pamphile's workshop contained 'remains of

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11 Lattimore, 199.

12 Cf. Bolt (1996b), 30f.

shipwrecked vessels'; PGM VII.465f. calls for a nail, and PGM V.54–69 for some water from a shipwreck).

2.2 Fear at Sea

It is not surprising, then, that a storm at sea engendered great fear. To be on the sea in a storm was to be staring your death in the face and, being filled with more than the normal share of terrors, it was a terrible death indeed. Sailors were counted amongst the brave, as in the anonymous literary papyrus 'Moschion, Laches' (1st AD):

> Look at sailors — constantly up against every difficulty! Storm, gale, rain, mountainous seas, lightning, hail, thunder, seasickness, [...] darkness! And yet every one of them awaits the gleam of Hope and despairs not of the future. One takes hold of the ropes and watches the sail, another prays the Samothracian gods[13] to assist the pilot, hauls the sheets in [...]
>
> (Page**61**; cf. Lucian *Pereg.* 43)

But fear was perfectly understandable, as was the need for rescue. Sailors could pray to their various national gods (e.g. Jonah 1:5f.), but there were also certain gods who specialised in sea rescues, e.g. the Dioscouri (cf. Acts 28: 11) and the Samothracian gods. Although the mystery religions were concerned with the fate in the afterlife, the Samothracian initiates were also promised safety in this realm. Just like Lucius was told that Isis would lengthen his life (Apul. *Met.* 11.6), these initiates apparently believed that they had special protection against shipwreck and drowning.[14]

Sailors could also seek magical protection. If magic could cause storms (Hipp. *Morb.Sacr.* 4; cf. 'Seth who makes the sea boil' AthAg, pp. 245ff.), it could also calm them. Apparently Orpheus had the power to 'lull to sleep the howling winds and the hail, and the drifting snow, and the roaring sea' (*AG* 7.8), so perhaps it was hoped that his art would continue in the songs of the sailors which were probably magical charms ensuring safe passage (e.g. Page**98** = PGM XXIX [3rd AD]). There were also spells which promised the ability to calm the sea: 'Let the earth be still, let the air be still, let the sea be

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13 Cf. Ramsay**289**: 'having been saved at sea' (σωθεὶς κατὰ θάλ[ασ]σαν) by the Samothracian gods.

14 Faraone (1995), 324f.

still; let the winds also be still, and do not be a hindrance to this my divination' (PGM VII.320ff.).

When Jesus stood and ordered the sea to 'be muzzled', he uses a familiar magical word (φιμόω). Is he using some kind of magic to calm this storm, and to keep his friends safe? Or is there some other reason that the sea grew calm? Who then is this?

2.3 Who then is this?

Crossing the sea could be for commerce or for conquest — both well-known Roman pursuits. Even in the early days of the empire, Propertius offered a quiet protest. Because of Roman avarice they found themselves 'now o'er such wide seas [...] tempest tossed; we seek out a foe and pile fresh war on war,' (Propertius 3.5.10–12). He attempted to put the imperial project of seeking wealth through war into perspective: 'Yet no wealth shall you carry to the waves of Acheron: naked, you fool, you shall be borne to the ship of hell. There victor and vanquished shades are mingled in the equality of death' (3.5.13–15). Rome was braving the uncertain enterprise of sea travel for the sake of plundering the earth. In the interests of empire they were taking people to the Acheron and this very early critic of the eternal city was asking, what for?

One of her representatives, Julius Caesar, smuggled himself into a boat in pursuit of Pompey. When he detected the pilot was changing course because of heavy seas, he unveiled himself and said 'Go on, good sir, be brave and fear nothing! But entrust your sails to Fortune and receive her breeze confident because you bear Caesar and Caesar's Fortune'. Plutarch comments 'Thus firmly was he convinced that Fortune accompanied him on his voyages, his travels , his campaigns, his commands; Fortune's task it was to enjoin calm upon the sea, summer weather upon the winter-time, speed upon the slowest of men, courage upon the most dispirited ...' (Plut. *De fort. Rom.* 319C–D).

The disciples display a thoroughly normal response to the storm. It probably meant that they were about to perish and a miserable death at sea was filled with even greater terrors than normal. With a word of command, Jesus calmed the sea, displaying the same confidence in 'Fortune' as Caesar. But although he did nothing except give the order to

the pilot to go on, Jesus gave the orders to the storm and it responded. What kind of Fortune is that?

The Fortune of the Romans helped them to cross land and sea seeking 'glory' through the plunder of the nations. Augustus had stilled the storms of a troubled world. Jesus' 'fortune' had kept them safe at sea and he had literally stilled the storm. But why was he crossing it? What plunder was he seeking? He had previously riddled about plundering the realm of the prince of *daimons* and his first sea crossing issues in a series of events which are nothing other than an assault on the underworld.

3. Suppliant #6: Out Of The Tombs (5:1–20)

1. Text to Reader:

Apart from the initial plural verb (v.1) the disciples are absent and cannot play a role towards the readers. Instead, they are strongly aligned with the man from the tombs.

1.1 The Man from the Tombs

This 'man from the tombs, in unclean spirit' met Jesus after he crossed the lake (vv.1f.). The scene is focalised through the man, since he is the subject of the verb while Jesus is referred to with a personal pronoun (v.2b). A lengthy and detailed description of his plight creates sympathy with him (vv.3–5). Interrupting the flow of the action (v.2: action begins; vv.3–5: description; v.6 action resumes), this evidently provides information which is essential for the proper understanding of the scene.[1] The extensive detail slows the pace, keeping the readers' attention on him to create the illusion that they are themselves viewing the man's plight.[2] All this decreases the distance between the readers and the man.

Although he is 'in unclean spirit' (v.2), more interest is initially shown in his circumstances. That he dwelt amongst the tombs is especially emphasised — reported twice in the key initial position (vv.2f.) and then resumed in final position in the description (v.5). This characteristic is explained by a second, that he was so strong he could no longer be bound, despite many attempts (vv.3f.).

Despite these features, the description does not encourage fear (contrast Mt 8:28b), but arouses sympathy. The details are filled with pathos: he came from the tombs (v.2b); in fact, he lived in the tombs (v.3); this was a home of last resort, for many times people had tried to bind him, unsuccessfully (vv.3bf.); now he spent his nights and his days

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1 It acts as explicit commentary, cf. Fowler, 105, 101.

2 For tempo and time manipulation, see Licht, Ch. 5; Rimmon-Kenan, 51–56; cf. Chatman, 62–84.

amongst the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones (v.5). This is a picture of a human being in great need, who, although alive, lives amongst the dead.

1.2 The Clash of the Spirits

The scene continues to powerfully focalise the readers through the man (v.6), through an inside view of perception (ἰδών),[3] and the reader travels with the man 'from afar' towards Jesus. His cry recalls the man in Capernaum, with whom the reader had been aligned. His recognition of Jesus as Son of the Most High also creates sympathy, since it sounds like the opinion of Jesus expressed by previous reliable commentary (1:1, 11; 3:11), even if raising the question how the man could be so discerning. The direct speech maintains the sense of closeness to this character, as does the pathos of the content (v.7). When the cry is initially heard, it is heard as that of the man himself, adding to the sense of his desperate situation: having been so alienated from all normal human intercourse, he is so filled with fear of being harmed further by this new stranger that he resorts to a strong adjuration to prevent Jesus from torturing him.

The narrative then provides a mini-flashback which forces the reader to re-read the man's cry. The narrator explains the cry (γάρ)[4] by reference to information which has so far been withheld. Jesus had previously been saying,[5] 'Come out, O unclean spirit, from this man' (v.8). The verbal similarities in the flashback[6] recall the scene in Capernaum where the unclean spirit spoke through the man. This encourages the readers to similarly view the cry of the Gerasene. Once the readers realise that the spirit is directly addressing Jesus, the insight into his identity is understandable (cf. 1:24; 1:34; 3:11).[7] The revelation of the true source of his cry, in turn, continues to promote sympathy with the man, for now his degraded condition is explained by the presence of these spirits (cf. v.2b).

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3 Cf. Fowler, 121f.

4 This acts as explicit commentary, Fowler, 92.

5 So the imperfect, cf. Zerwich, §290.

6 Williams, 109.

7 The cry acts as implicit commentary, confirming previous reliable commentary (1:1; 11), Fowler, 131.

The question about his name revealed that the spirits were multiple, as in Capernaum (1:24), which is emphasised by Legion's explanatory gloss 'for we are many' (v.9). At this moment, when the source of the man's remarkable strength and living death becomes clear, the readers' sympathy with him reaches its peak.

It is here that the contest between the spirits and Jesus also becomes central. The man fades from view and the spirits speak directly to Jesus. The readers are now assigned the role of observers. As the spirits desperately beg Jesus not to send them out of the region (v.10), the readers sense their fear and, with Capernaum in the background, their imminent demise.

1.3 The Spirits into the Sea

By providing the necessary background information regarding the large herd of pigs nearby (v.11), the narrator aligns the readers with himself, enabling them to continue to observe the action from a more detached vantage point. They hear the spirits' request to enter the pigs (v.12) and of Jesus' permission (v.13a). The dramatic details give the impression that they actually observe the spirits entering the pigs, the herd rushing down the slope into the sea, and the two thousand being drowned in the sea (v.13). The double reference to the sea reinforces the importance of this location. As they enter the underworld through this watery portal, the swine meet the fate from which the disciples were rescued in the previous scene.

1.4 The Aftermath

From a distance, the readers observe the swineherds' flight and hear of their widespread report drawing the crowds to 'see' what had happened (v.14). Although the visual verbs (ἰδεῖν, θεωροῦσιν) briefly allow the reader to see the man who had previously been *daimonised* sitting clothed and in his right mind (v.15) through the perception of the crowds,[8] the rapid change of subjects works against any sustained alignment with them. By specifically mentioning that the man was the one who had had the legion, the narrator does not permit the readers to forget the events just described,

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8 Fowler, 121f.

and, through this reminder, underlines the enormity of what had happened to this man. Against this memory, the reaction of the Gerasene populace comes as a shock: they were afraid. Since this recalls the disciples' reaction to Jesus' amazing deed on the boat (4:41), the natural presumption is that they were afraid of Jesus, the one who had calmed the man whom no-one had been able to bind, and who had dwelt amongst the tombs.

The report that the swineherds reiterated the events they had witnessed (v.16), encourages the reader to recall the scene for the second time, and, once again, the reaction of the crowds comes as a shock: there is no Capernaum amazement (1:27; cf. 2:12), and no marvelling crowds (1:28, 32–34, 37, 45; 2:13; 3:7–12, 20, 32; 4:1), but, instead, the Gerasenes beg Jesus to leave their region (v.17).

1.5. The Report

As Jesus steps into the boat, the man who had been *daimonised* becomes an actor. His request that Jesus allow him 'to be with him' (ἵνα μετ' αὐτοῦ ᾖ, v.18) recalls the calling of the twelve (cf. 3:14), which indicates that this man, wittingly or unwittingly, is asking to be one of Jesus' closest companions.[9] Although this group has already been closed (3:13–19), when Jesus called them to be with him, it was an intermediate step towards being sent out to continue his mission (3:14f.). Although refusing to allow the Gerasene man into this closed number (v.19), Jesus nevertheless sent him on a mission. He was told to go home and tell what the Lord had done for him and how he had had mercy on him.

As the fulfilment of his mission is reported it contains two subtle changes for the readers' ears only. Instead of going to his home, he goes throughout the Ten Cities and instead of proclaiming what the Lord had done, he proclaims what Jesus had done (v.20). This should not be taken as a case of 'disobedience'[10] which 'prevents the reader from completely identifying with this character,'[11] for this runs counter to the narrative's previous strong alignment of the readers with the character. In addition, there are

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9 Williams, 111.

10 Williams, 111f., 126, 135, 154.

11 Williams, 126.

absolutely no negative judgements upon him. Instead, his actions are read more naturally as an abundance of obedience: so overwhelmed was he by what had occurred, that he was apparently convinced that Jesus could be equated with the Lord and he went even beyond the bounds of his mission. The end of the story is consistent with this reading for it is only at this point that we hear of the amazement that was previously expected but not delivered (vv.15, 17). As the readers hear that 'everyone was amazed', they too are able to enter into this choral ending and rejoice with this man.

1.6 The Significance for the Narrative

This incident constitutes the supreme exorcism in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus' unanswered riddle to his opponents had suggested that no-one can plunder the strong man's house, 'unless he first binds the strong man' (3:27). The narrative stressed the strength of the man from the tombs, by saying that 'no-one was able to bind him any longer' (οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι, v.3), for 'no-one was strong enough to conquer him' (οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι, v.4). By means of these allusions to 3:27, the subjugation of this unbindable strong man suggests another dimension to the readers: Jesus' riddle is finding an answer and *the* strong man is being subdued; as Jesus banishes the legion of *daimons* and delivers the man from the tombs, the 'prince of the *daimons*' suffers a major defeat.

The scene stresses the radical change in the man's circumstances. As a result of the Legion being cast out, he was rescued from the graves and sent back into ordinary life. He went from crying out in distress day and night, to preaching far and wide. He was brought from death to life and this issued in his proclamation of God's mercy. When Jesus defeated the strong man, a man who had been his victim walked out from amongst the graves and began to live again.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Living with the Dead

Living in the tombs, the man is clearly amongst the dead. The readers may recognise this as a case of the exclusion of a 'madman', as practised by some barbarian

nations (Hdt. 1.138.1). The legion of *daimons* is easily identified as a hoard of ghosts, since tombs were their natural location. In addition, 'madness' was believed to be caused by the souls of the departed,[12] and the man may also be seen as someone who had practiced magic himself, but had lost control of the spirits who now controlled him. The man's self-destructive tendency (v.5) also fits the scenario of him being plagued with ghosts, who were known for violence directed toward injury and death (cf. *BJ* 7.185; *VitAp* 3.38). He is living with the dead and the dead are living with him.[13]

2.2 Unable to be Bound

2.2.1 His Strength

Greco-Roman readers would recognise the man's exceptional strength as a sign of the supernatural. A story of Dionysos being captured by pirates who thought him a king's son (pre-3rd BC) provides a nice parallel:

> δεσμοῖς ἔθελον δεῖν ἀργαλέοισι. τὸν δ' οὐκ ἴσχανε δεσμά, λύγοι δ' ἀπὸ τηλόσε πῖπτον χειρῶν ἠδὲ ποδῶν
>
> They sought to bind him with rude bonds, but the bonds would not hold him, and the withes fell far away from his hands and feet.
>
> (*Homeric Hymns* 7.12–14)

The inability to bind him issues in a discussion about which supernatural being they have detained. The source of the exceptional strength of Mark's man from the tombs is not a divinity, but the spirit(s) from the tombs with which he is afflicted.

2.2.2 The Attempts to Bind

The many attempts to bind him may have been motivated by self-protection (cf. Mt 8:28), but it is also possible that they sprang from more noble motives. Exorcisms operated upon assumptions of what is commonly called 'sympathetic magic', but better termed 'persuasively analogical' practices.[14] So, for example, some lead curses hoped that the victim become as cold, inert and silent as the lead of the tablet; the use of bound or

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12 Baroja, 77.

13 At least one commentator has recognised that the *daimon*s possessing this man are the spirits of the dead — even speculating that they are the ghosts of those who fell in battle with the Romans! Theißen (1983), 89 n.21; 255 n.58.

14 Faraone (1991a), 8, referring to the anthropological work of Tambiah) and Lloyd.

pierced voodoo dolls of metal, clay or wax imitated the binding of the spell; water (and spittle) was poured on the body so that the spirit/disease would imitate its flow away from the body; or an animal was treated in a way corresponding to the desire of the spell. One of the very ancient practices associated with exorcism which operated on such principles was the binding of the victim.

The influence of the spirit upon the victim was itself regarded as a binding. This was sought by malevolent curses (e.g. PGM IV.296–326; 330f; 350; [372, 376]; 380), often used in conjunction with figures of wax, clay, or metal, bound up and pierced in gruesome fashion. An illness or affliction could therefore be considered the result of the spirit binding a person, possibly as a result of some curse. This language is even detected in the language of sickness (P.Oxy 1381: 'healed the diseases binding them', τὰς κατεχούσας αὐτοὺ[]ς νόσους ἔσωσεν). Somehow the illness has itself become unbound: 'Headache, though bound in heaven, hath escaped on earth' (Thompson **ţ.IX**.147). The magician would seek to release the person bound, by rebinding the forces loosed against them: 'May he not be held in bondage, May his fetters be loosened' (Thompson **1.III**.124–125); '[Who]lly bound and sealed and tied in knots and chained (are you) that you [g]o away and be sealed and depart from the house' (Isbell **10**). On the principles of sympathetic magic, such a procedure may have included some kind of binding procedure, whether the tying of knots (PGM IV.331); or binding of a figure (PGM IV.296ff.); or even drawing a bound figure.[15] It may also involve the binding of the patient (Thompson **ţ.IX**). Now, if the many attempts to bind this man were actually noble attempts at exorcism, then their failure signals the extremely powerful nature of his spirits and it is no surprise to find they are so numerous that they use the name 'Legion'.

This name may also indicate why the previous attempts were futile. The exorcist had to name the spirit. Although this required knowledge, it did not have to be exact, so the spells tended to list numerous names of spirits and more were always being added (such as, later, the name of Jesus; see Acts 19:13–16; PGM IV.3020; ?Isbell**52**.3). By

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15 Cf. Isbell **8** and p.36 n.8.

this 'shot-gun' approach, the magicians hoped to name the spirit concerned and gain mastery over it. But, here in the Decapolis, if there are enough spirits to warrant the name Legion (i.e. could be up to 6000),[16] no exorcist could hope to gain control.

2.3 The Clash of Spirits

The encounter between Jesus and the man has a number of features reminiscent of magical practice. The use of ὁρκίζω and its compounds is frequent in magic, although here it is in reverse: the spirits adjure Jesus! The *daimons*' plea, 'do not torture me' μή με βασανίσῃς, uses another word from the magical texts,[17] and illustrates the fear in which the *daimons* existed and by which they were magically manipulated. The request for the name.(v.9) is necessary in order to gain control (cf. PGM XIII.425ff.); and the great cry is also reminiscent of ghostly behaviour (v.7). These features combine to make the story a clash between two great powers. The man who could not be bound (v.4) attempts to bind Jesus (v.7) — as if Jesus is the superior *daimon* and the *daimon* is the magician! Nevertheless, Jesus proves to be the master.

2.4 Into the Sea

2.4.1 The Fear of a Changed Location

A special feature of this story is the *daimons*' request that Jesus not send them 'out of the region' (ἔξω τῆς χώρας, v.10). This seems difficult to account for,[18] if their fear is simply of being sent outside the region of the Gerasenes (cf. v.1), or even the region of the tombs, even on the theory that *daimons* are geographically limited.[19] Instead, they are

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16 Gealy, 110; Watson and Parker.

17 Eitrem, 24f. See Versnel (1991) 73, for the requests for the gods to use such juridicial torture. The love charms often request that the victim be tortured by their thoughts of the interested party, occasionally with this word, e.g. DT **242, 271**. PGM II.51?; IV.1407, 1412f., 1766; XIII.289; XIXa.50f.; XXXVI.201. SuppMag**72** (Augustan) threatens the underworld gods with intractable headache until the magician's (probably erotic) purposes are fulfilled.

18 If the request is simply about a local geographical region, then Jesus' permission, if genuine, constitutes a departure from normal exorcistic common sense. He himself would acknowledge that the *daimons* would look elsewhere for another home (Lk 11:24–26). Cf. Gordon, on the theory that the Aramaic incantation bowls were used to trap the *daimons* within them: 'the last thing the ancients wished to do was to trap on their own property the demon which might subsequently escape and work mischief on the spot,' cited in Isbell, 8.

19 Hooker, 143. I am not sure the evidence proves the existence of this belief. Luke 11:24–26 hardly warrants it and the frequently asserted viewpoint that *daimons* preferred deserts and ruins is derived from spells which sought to cast them into these places, for the very reason that

probably referring to an underworld space.[20] In the spells invoking Helios, the region of the dead is the realm in which the *daimons* are recruited by him on his nightly underworld journey to be released for the use of the necromancer in the upper world.[21] A silver phylactery may provide a rationale for their fear in its threat to remove them from this region, to regions 'below the springs and the abyss'.[22]

The springs were also a feature of the underworld. They appear on the 'Orphic' gold leaves at the entrance to the underworld and are the source of the refreshing waters from which the initiates receive their 'cool water' in order to forget the bodily world and enter into the realms of afterlife bliss.[23] But here, the *daimons* are being sent below these springs, i.e. far away from the entrance, and below the abyss, which is in the direction of Tartaros, i.e. the realm from which they may never return. The combined picture is that they are being threatened with expulsion from the underworld regions which still allowed some traffic with the world of the body, for, once banished to 'below', their potential for harm has ceased. Does the fear of such nether-nether regions lie behind Legion's question?[24] If so, this has implications for understanding the result of this clash with the ghosts.

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they were uninhabited. This may partly lie behind their fear here (see Gundry, 251f.). If this view has anything going for it, the *daimons* would be asking to stay around these particular tombs, for spirits naturally inhabit graveyards.

20 The 'region' (χῶρος) of the dead appears several times in the magical papyri (PGM IV.446, 1967; VIII.80; VII.268).

21 Cf. also the *defixio* SEG VI.**803** (3rd AD) which asks Helios to send 'the wailing of the violently killed' upon an opponent, presumably by bringing their *daimons* up with him. Helios is invoked in the Augustan SuppMag**72**= GMPT CXXII. For this same pattern of the *daimons* being called up by the sun and appearing in human form, see N-S **Bowl 13**. A late Coptic charm describes Helios as the Father of 'those in the abyss' Mirecki, 458.

22 Jordan (1991), 61–69 = Gager**125**. See also PGM IV.1247f., where the *daimons* are bound with fetters and delivered into 'the black chaos in perdition' εἰc τὸ μέλαν χάοc ἐν ταῖc ἀπωλείαιc. For the abyss, see PGM I.343; III.554; IV.512, 1120; 1148; 1350; 2835; 3064; VII.261, 517; XIII.169, 482; XXXV.1; XXXVI.217; LXII.29, 31.

23 See Harrison, 574–586, text **I** and **II**; Zuntz, 368f.

24 Luke takes it this way (8:31) and in Mt 8:29 the fear of torture before the appointed time may indicate that it is then that they will be sent into the Abyss (cf. 25:41).

2.4.2 The Pigs into the Sea

The pigs being sent into the sea is not simply a conventional feature of such stories, providing the demonstration necessary to prove the exorcism successful (cf. *AJ* 8.42–49, a bowl turned over; perhaps *GenApoc* 20:21, 'the king arose and spoke';[25] *VitAp* 4.20, a statue moves; Lucian *Philops.* 16, a *daimon* departs as smoke; *ActsPeter* 2.11, Caesar's statue is kicked to pieces), but it is an integral part of the help Jesus provided the man.

Given the *daimons*' fear (v.10), it is difficult to say what occurs when Jesus allows them to enter the swine to plunge into the sea. It may be that the sea is a natural home for the *daimons* (e.g. N-S **Am6**.14 has a demon from the sea), but this is because the sea is an underworld location, or, at the least, a portal into the underworld. After all, it was the way so many sailors entered this realm, and, not being properly buried, the potential for becoming ghosts was high (cf. Mk 6:49). So Jesus could be sending the dead back into the underworld.

But have they simply returned to the 'region of the dead', or have they gone to a region further below? If the former, the upper world is afforded only temporary relief — until the next time they were summoned forth by magic. But, given their fearful question and the narrative's previous suggestions that Jesus has come to deal decisively with underworld beings who still operate above (1:24; 3:27), the readers may well suspect that he has 'destroyed' them, i.e. permanently removed them from any further influence in the upper world. A Latin curse against charioteers (DT**286**=Grant, 241 [3rd AD]) indicated that the *daimon* it was enlisting to kill them had been set free by 'the god of the sea and the air. ...'. Jesus has demonstrated himself to be the 'god of the sea' (4:35ff) and no matter who had permitted them to enter the upper world, Jesus now rescinds this freedom.

The pigs are often taken as a signal that this incident took place in non-Jewish territory. The Jews' avoidance of the pig was certainly known in the Greco-Roman world, even if the reasons for it were little understood (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* IV.5 669E–

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25 Duling, 5, calls this a 'mild demonstration'.

671C). However, instead of reading with Jewish eyes, the Greco-Roman readers are more likely to understand the significance of the pigs according to their own cultural framework.

Although pigs could also be sacrificed to Zeus as a purification rite,[26] they were the standard sacrifices offered to the chthonic gods. Julian refrained from pigs because they 'are coarse, earthly, vile creatures, only offered to the chthonic gods' (*Orations* 5.175–7). They were apparently used in Athens as sacrifices to dispel unclean spirits (*Schol.Aeschin.* in or. 1.23; *Schol.Dem.* in or. 4.1b) and five Latin curse tablets from Rome (mid 1st BC) promised Proserpine and Pluto the offering of 'dates, figs, and a black pig' if the curse is completed by March (Fox=Gager**134**). Once Augustus added his genius to the Lares (7 BC), a pig was sacrificed to the Lares Augusti.[27]

Faraone has suggested that the sacrifice of the pig is one of 'the recurring patterns [which] suggests that the *praxis* of Assyrian or Babylonian rituals reappears as part of the plot of Greek myths and legends'[28] (e.g. Aesch. *Eum.* 283; Ap.Rh. 4.698ff.; and vase paintings in which the god stabs a small pig over a youth's head). He refers to an Assyrian cuneiform tablet, which instructs that a piglet be dissected over the head of a patient so that the blood is spread everywhere (i.e. Thompson "**N**".ii.40ff.). Such rituals as these suggests a clue to the meaning of the pigs entering the sea.

The sea was in itself involved in purification sacrifices. For example, the Achaeans were told by Calchas to 'wash off their pollution and throw the pollution into the sea' (*Il.* 1.314). This anticipates the practice of the purifiers in *On the sacred disease*, who 'bury some of (the polluted remains) in the ground, cast some in the sea, and carry others to the mountains' (*Morb.Sacr.* 4.43–46). But, in the Greek world, impurity could also be

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26 The sacrifice to Zeus of a piglet, in the context of a meal to purify from *elasteroi*, is also found in the Lex Sacra from Selinous (Col. B, l. 5), see Jameson et al, 17, cf. the Kyrene inscription LSSupp**115**. If the offering to Zeus is to stay the wrath of the Erinyes (cf. Ap.Rh. 4.698ff. and the sacrifice of an Athenian manslayer on return from exile, Dem. *Or.* 23.72, 73) then the chthonic associations are not so far away.

27 Huzar, 3117.

28 Faraone (1990), 240.

absorbed by a variety of substances (eggs, fleeces, mud, bran mash), and, as in the ANE, by animals.[29]

This brings us back to the ancient Semitic practice of the transfer of disease to animals. The tablet which illustrates practices which, according to Faraone, may lay behind the Greek use of pigs — which, incidentally, uses both a pig and water from the sea — explains the ritual in substitutionary terms:

> Give the pig in his stead and Let the flesh be as his flesh, And the blood as his blood, And let him hold it; Let the heart be as his heart (Which thou has placed upon his heart) And let him hold it; ... [That the] pig may be a substitute for him ... May the evil Spirit, the evil Demon stand aside!
>
> (Thompson "N".iii.10ff.; cf. 30ff.)

In the cultural framework of the Greco-Roman readers, the pigs are the usual chthonic sacrifices; they are involved in purificatory rites; and they act as a substitution for a person in order to rid them from the influence of the *daimons*. If so, these pigs moving from the man into the sea could be seen as a sacrifice to the underworld gods, which draws off the unclean spirits for the cleansing of the man.

2.5 Jesus Cares for the Perishing

Several unanswered questions had opened gaps in the discourse to guide the reading of what follows. The disciples had asked 'do you not care that we are perishing?' (4:38) and 'who then is this that even the winds and waves obey him?' (4:41). The questions begin to find answers in Gerasa, where Jesus not only demonstrates that he does care for one who is perishing under the evil and destructive influence of the world of the dead, but also that he is the one who can liberate people from such beings. The story is cast as a contest between Jesus and the power(s) of death.[30] The man leaves the tombs and once again enters ordinary life. The 'dead' had come to life again.

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29 Parker, 230f.

30 Robinson, 87–88, rightly noted the sharp contrast between death and life (5:15, 19 cf. 2f., 5), as does Gundry, despite according it a secondary status.

The next two suppliants, whose stories are intercalated, both, in their own way, reinforce Jesus' ability to deal with death. Although the disciples are present, they act either negatively or neutrally, which hardly promotes engagement with the readers, who are once again strongly aligned with the suppliants.

4. Suppliant #7a: The Synagogue Ruler (5:21–24a)

1. Text to Reader: Life from the Brink of Death

After Jesus crosses the lake and a large crowd gathers (5:21), the narrator mentions that Jesus was παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν. This appears rather unnecessary and so stands out as a deliberate re-use of the phrase from Mark's first major section (1:16; 2:13; cf. 3:7; 4:1), which evokes the well-established pattern and erects the expectation that a call to follow Jesus is about to occur. However, instead of this, Jesus is summoned to follow someone else.

A man comes who is described in terms of his position in the synagogue — as he will be throughout the account (vv.22, 35, 36, 38), despite the fact that his name could have been used (v.22). Although part of the religious establishment, the story will show that he is not opposed to Jesus,[1] but because of his need he has been drawn towards him.

The scene is focalised through this man by naming him[2] and providing an inside view of visual perception (v.22b, ἰδων).[3] The incongruity of a synagogue ruler falling at Jesus' feet may suggest that he recognises Jesus' authority (cf. [1:40]; 5:6), but it certainly indicates his desperation, as does his repeated begging and his actual request. The direct speech enables the readers to hear his words for themselves. He begs Jesus to come and lay his hands on his 'little daughter' — the diminutive adding extra pathos to the scene by stressing his endearment for her — because she is at the point of death

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1 *Pace* Malbon (1989), 275f.; cf. Williams, 113.

2 For naming as a verbal indicator of focalisation, see Rimmon-Kenan, 82f.

3 Fowler, 121f.

(v.23, ἐσχάτως ἔχει),[4] and he wants Jesus to touch her 'in order that she might be saved and live' (v.23b).

When Jesus left with him, the readers also embark on this journey to bring life to the dying daughter (v.24). The switch of subjects begins the process of dis-alignment, restoring the readers to the role of observers. They are accompanied by a large crowd, crushing in upon him (cf. 3:9–10). But before they come to Jairus' daughter, the narrator interrupts the journey to tell of an afflicted one (cf. μάστιξ, vv.29, 34, cf. 3:10) in the crushing crowd (vv.27, 24, 31, cf. 3:9) who wishes to touch Jesus (vv.27, 28, 30, 31; cf. 3:10) so that she might be saved. The readers are forced to hear her story, before they hear what happens to the girl.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 The Situation

Whatever the exact medical reason for the girl's condition, she has reached the point of death. Although medicine had its prescribed remedies for children (e.g. Pliny *HN* 20.114, 191f.; 28.39, 114, 257–9; 30.135), it was too late, for Jairus is already seeking help beyond the profession. Plutarch reports and explains a Pythagorean allegory which applied to those reaching this point in life:

> "Do not turn back on reaching the borders": that is, when about to die and seeing the border of life is near, to bear it calmly and not be disheartened.
>
> (Plut. *De lib.educ.* 12F)

Many other philosophers attempted to calm peoples' fears in the face of death, which in itself indirectly testifies to such fears and to how difficult it must have been to attain this calm. But what about when a child reaches this point of no return?

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4 Cf. Diod. 10.3.4.

2.2 Death and the Child

2.2.1 Expendable Children?

If the people of the empire had an average life expectancy of between 20 and 25, and only 40% of the population reached that age, and every child had a 50% chance of reaching the age of 10, the mortality rate amongst children was extremely high.[5] With such high losses, it is sometimes suggested that people were hardened towards the death of children,[6] in which case, Jairus would be something of an oddity. The Stoic resignation to fate perhaps came closest to this attitude, epitomised in Marcus Aurelius. Believing that childhood illness must be accepted as a natural event, he refused to pray, like unphilosophical parents, that his sick child would not die. Instead, he prayed for himself: 'May I have no fear of losing him'. He found solace in a saying said to be from Epictetus, that

> when you kiss your child, you should say "Perhaps it will be dead in the morning". "Words of ill-omen", they told him. Not ill-omened, but referring to a process of nature. Otherwise it would also be ill-omened to speak of the corn being harvested.

Writing to his wife when their two year old daughter had died while he was away, Plutarch commended her for responding in a similar manner — so fitting for one married to a philosopher (*Cons. ad ux.* 608B–609D)!

However, even this evidence suggests that such an attitude had to be deliberately cultivated, which is a far cry from the suggestion that parents were unmoved by the death of their children. Why is it, for example, that child mortality is one of the few contexts in which Marcus Aurelius actually meditated upon children? Since he lost four of his own children as youngsters, each before the next was born, perhaps his meditation, as well as his 'more philosophical' prayer, stands as indirect testimony to his own pain. Certainly his philosophy did not prevent him from prohibiting his daughters to be taken outside at night, for fear the wind would do them harm, or speaking of their illnesses in his correspondence. Or again, it must have been regarded

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5 Wiedemann, 11–17.

6 So Wiedemann, 16f.

as a tragedy for Cornelia to lose 10 out of 12 children (Sen. *ad Helv.* 16.6), in order for Seneca to parade her as an example of womanly bearing in grief. Plutarch's advice to his wife assumed that she would be grieving, even if this grief was to be expressed in a controlled fashion. Since his letter is but one of many other consolations on the death of a child (Cf. P.Oxy. 115), it seems clear that, just as childhood death was a common feature of ancient life, so too was parental grief.[7]

It is also clear that the philosophical approach was not the only one adopted. Even as part of Plutarch's advice to his wife, he must warn her against others who weep and wail in, what is to him, an unseemly fashion (*Cons. ad ux.* 610B–C). The evidence from grave stones, as unrepresentative as it may be, at least provides a sample of opinions including many indications that the loss of a child was regarded as a grievous tragedy.[8]

2.2.2 Burying Your Children

Parental grief would be real, even if the reasons for it are judged to be rather 'selfish' by the more child-conscious standards of a later day. The death of a child represented the death of the family's hopes for the future: 'Here Philippus laid his 12 year old son, Nicoteles, his great hope' (*AG* 7.453).[9] Part of these 'hopes' concerned the parents' own future. The loss of a child was mourned as a loss of a natural harvest (cf. *AG* 7.467), which left the parents with no-one to care for them in old age or to properly bury them.[10]

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7 The information in this paragraph is drawn from Wiedemann, 6, 8f., 96f.

8 'The evidence of inscriptions is far too scanty and too atypical to function as some sort of opinion poll of what parents thought about their children,' Wiedemann, 42. Although Garland, xi finds the epitaphs of little value, he recognizes that they do testify to 'the sense of loss [the deceased] bequeathed to his relatives'.

9 For the child as 'an investment in future security', see Wiedemann, 39–43. Cf. 'I have become childless and without hope. I keep watch at the grave of my son' (TSol 20:20).

10 See Wiedemann, 9, 39–43. These twin ideas are enshrined in the duty of ΓΗΡΟΒΟΣΚΕΙΝ in the law of Solon and Plato *Leg.* 11, and expressed elsewhere e.g. *Il.* 4.477f.; Hes. *Op.* 187f.; Eur., *Med.* 1032; *Rhe* 980ff.; Ar. *Ach.* 688ff. Cf. Plato's ideal life: 'to be rich, healthy, honoured by the Greeks, reach old age, and, after burying one's parents well, to be laid out well by one's own children and buried magnificently (μεγαλοπρεπῶς), *Hp.Ma.* 291D–E.

The inscriptions testify to parents' disappointment at children predeceasing them, as if 'cheated of the return that was due to them.'[11] But, alongside this thoroughly reciprocal view of the child-parent relationship, other evidence shows that the tragedy was also felt on behalf of the child. For example, the tombstone of a seven-year-old complains: 'I did not know what it is to enjoy the life of a man' (1st or 2nd AD); and another: 'what great hopes would there have been, if the fates had allowed it; when I was a boy, the Muses gave me the gift of eloquence.'[12] In addition, it is not clear that some of the supposedly 'selfish' reasons ought to be condemned so harshly. The necessity for someone to care for the aged and eventually bury them, as a reality in a community without social services should not be minimised.[13] But it is difficult to see that this motivation exhausts the sense of tragedy in the frequently occurring sentiment that something seems awry in parents burying their children, when it ought to be the other way around (*AG* 7.261, 361, 466, cf. 468, 638).

2.2.3 Dying Young

Dying young was a tragedy because it meant that bitter fate had cheated the person of life before they had reached their allotted span. For female children,[14] this is frequently expressed in terms of dying unmarried,[15] which is particularly pertinent for Jairus' daughter, who, at twelve, would be recognised as entering marriagable age.

Amongst the 12-year-olds mourned on the tombstones in the *Greek Anthology* Bk. 7 (cf. 467), we find one who was a bride-to-be (547) and another 'an unmarried maiden' (604). Many others mourn unmarried girls (486; 487, aged 14; 488; 489; 490; 491; 507B; 515; 527; 568, aged 14), some who died on their very wedding night (182, 183, 188, 298), still others who died within a year of marriage (566, aged 16; 567, aged 16, 'mourned by her husband and father'). Sometimes this is accepted

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11 Wiedemann, 40.

12 Both from Wiedemann, 41f.

13 As Wiedemann, 42, admits.

14 Although this is not exclusive to females, cf. *AG* 7.515.

15 Wiedemann, 41. Cf. the unwedded girls, brides, and young bachelors listed amongst the dead (*Od.* 11.34 ff.; Vergil, *Aen.* 6.297–332). This tragedy also finds expression in various myths in which 'girls die specifically when ready for marriage' Dowden, 13.

philosophically: 'A. He knew not wed-lock. B. Nor the pains of wedlock' (603; cf. Plut. *Cons. ad ux.* 611C, cf. 115E–F), but, on the whole, the sense of parental grief is patent. This is underlined by their sheer helplessness, despite their position or their possessions (cf. the inscription on the tomb of a son who died at 15 years and 24 days which mourns 'neither your grandfather's high office helped thee, nor the riches of thy father', 602).

2.2.4 Dying Young in a Magical Environment

If the more literary works leave parental emotion at the loss of a child a matter of debate, the magical materials certainly do not. The curses against the family show that losing children was undesirable and the spells seeking protection against child-killing *daimons* show that it was feared.

The Assyrio-Babylonian spells speak of the spirit which 'draweth up the little one like fish from the water' (Thompson"**X**".15; cf. "**C**".135); or those which 'snatch the child from the knees/loins of a man' (**IV**.25f.); or 'slay the [offspring?] ("**K**".60); or 'lay low the maiden, the little ones like a leek they tear in pieces' ("**T**".10). A charm in Sepher ha-Razim (2.124) drives off the spirits causing the death of children. An Aramaic bowl text seeks to remove the 'smiter and burner of boys and girls, male and female foetuses?' (Isbell**22**); others mention the 'king of demons' (Isbell**17**.5; **18**.4, 6; **19**.3; **20**.4, 7; **22**.2) who especially kills boys and girls, male and female foetuses (**19**.4; **20**.6,7), and ghosts who devour sons and daughters (**19**.9). In another, the *daimons* called up by the sun, urge each other on to further human destruction: 'let us sweep away the children in the market places, let us chase them in their bodies, let us chase them in their roads' (N-S **Bowl 13**).

2.2.5 Dying Young and the Fear of Ghosts

Magical practices also raise a special cause for concern in regard to the death of a child. Those who died before their alotted span (ἀώροι)[16] — sometimes further

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16 The scanty references to the ἀώροι in the literature suggested the theory that they were those who died young. This now seems supported by archeological evidence, wherever the age of the skeleton in a grave can be tested; cf. SGD, 152–153.

specified as the unmarried, the youths and the maidens — were believed to be barred from full entry into the underworld (cf. Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 499–500) and so to have a special propensity for becoming ghosts and being potent agents of magic. In the magical spells they are frequently summoned to perform the magicians' bidding.[17] Since the Romans widely believed that witches would even kill small children in order to use them for their spells (Cic. *Vat.* 6.14, Hor. *Epod.* 5 and Petr. *Sat.* 63.8), this was an additional source of parental fear, as reflected in the epitaph of a slave-boy, not yet four:

> The cruel hand of a witch has snatched me away, while she remains on earth to harm people with her skills.
>
> Parents: watch carefully over your children!
>
> (CLE**987** [1st AD])[18]

Given the magical power of such youthful victims of death, they may have also been liable to post-death mutilation. Pliny spoke of the practice of 'tearing to pieces for sinful practices the limbs of still-born babies' (*HN* 28.20.70). Whereas the curse tablets were deposited in graves simply in order to make use of the corpse and/or the corpse-daimon, some of the magical spells actually made use of parts of bodies in their rituals (PGM I.247f. the eye from a corpse of a βιαιοθάνατος; IV.296–466;[19] IV.2645ff., including 'a young boy's heart';[20] Gager**29**; cf. PsPhoc. 101–103, 149f.; Apul. *Met.* 2.20–30; Pamphile's workshop contained 'many limbs of dead and buried men', 3.17)

Adding to all the fear associated with death and especially the death of a child, the prospect that a beloved child may be entering an in-between existence in which they would be manipulated for all kinds of nefarious purposes, is hardly comforting.

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17 Although the Twelve Tables forbade burial within city walls, children under 40 days were buried under the threshold, or a wall of the house, Wiedemann, 179, which presumably made their graves quite accessible to those with magical plans.

18 Translation: Wiedemann, 179.

19 Cf. Gager, 96.

20 See Henrichs, 32–37.

2.3 Death and the Dead

2.3.1 Curses and the Family

Many curses were often directed not only at the person in view, but also their offspring and family.[21] This was sometimes with the intent to kill them, as in a curse against a number of people:

> All of these I consign, (inscribed) in lead and in wax and in water (?) and to unemployment and to destruction and to bad reputation and to (military?) defeat and in tombs — both these and all the children and wives who belong to them.
>
> (DTA**55** = SGD**105** = Gager**64** [4th BC])

If prominent people in a society were especially singled out for curses in general, and this kind of curse in particular, Mark's readers may have recognised this synagogue ruler as belonging to a category particularly at risk from this kind of cursing. Was his daughter at the point of death, simply because she was related to the wrong person?

2.3.2 Curses and Death

Curses aiming at the death of the victim were not so unusual. Judging from the rarity of the verb ὄλλυμι, familiar to cursing formulae, Faraone has argued that the death of the victim was rarely the goal of early *defixiones*.[22] Coincidentally, his two secure examples also curse family members: SGD**104** (5th BC) 'May they be utterly destroyed, they and their kin', followed by a list of names; 'May they be destroyed with their families' (3rd BC).[23] One of the oldest extant magical papyri (PGM XL [4th BC]) also uses this verb in a curse against 'my daughter's father [who] robbed [her] of the funeral gifts and tomb'. The curse asks that he 'may he be destroyed badly (κακῶς ἀπολλύοιτο), both by land and sea'. Despite the rarity of this verb, the aim to

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21 Cf. SGD**91** (*ca.* 450 BC); SGD**15** (4th/3rd BC) which curses οἰκία, household?; DTA**78**, **102**; one in which a man, his wife, chattel, and bodily and mental parts are cursed (SGD**3** [5th/4th BC]); DTA**77**=Gager**24**; SGD**170** (1st BC, see Bravo, 192); DT**4**=Gager**89** (1st BC); another (DT**208**; 3rd AD) wishes enmity upon a man and his whole household (οἰκία ὅλη); and more. Curses against the family are also common in funerary imprecations, see Strubbe, 43.

22 It appears only five times in published *defixiones*, three times in tentative restorations (DTA**75a** [*bis*]; SGD**75**); Faraone (1991a), 8 n.38.

23 From Faraone (1991a), n.38.

kill the victim, however, is by no means rare as time goes on. Gager**117** reports a series of spells (1st BC), which may be death spells, or they may concern admission to life. Another series of Latin curses (2nd AD) speaks of spilling the blood of the victim (DT**212**=Gager**95**), cf. Gager**96** and **97** (4th AD), and Gager**100** asks that they might pay with blood and life (1st/2nd AD). Death ('τέλος') is one of things protected against in Gager**128** (3rd /4th AD) which may imply a curse wishing it.

In terms of public perceptions, as time went on 'death was quite frequently considered to be the result of witchery, and such beliefs were not confined to any one sector of society.'[24] To take a second century literary example, Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* contains a story which clearly shows malevolent magic aiming at (and achieving) a man's death. The magician manipulated the ghost of a murdered woman (9.29), who possessed him and took him down to the underworld (9.31), apparently via prompting him to suicide. Although curse tablets are not mentioned in this incident, they are known to the wider story (3.17). Such practices must have been sufficiently well-known to the second-century audience for Apuleius to expect verisimilitude, and this was magic which aimed to kill. For an historical example, we can cite the incident in AD 19, when curse tablets were discovered in the floor of the house after the popular Germanicus had died unexpectedly (Tac. *Ann.* 2.69, cf. 3.13; Suet. 4.3; Dio Cass. 57.18).

A number of extant tablets show that the aim to kill was not unique to Germanicus' enemies. Several times we have had recourse to the vindictive counter-charm from the time of Julius Caesar, for example, which not only aimed at the death of the victim, but in the most painful of possible ways: '... take care of him by the month of February. Let him perish miserably. Let him leave life miserably. Let him be destroyed miserably. Take care of him so that he may not see another month' (Fox = Gager**134**).

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24 Baroja, 73.

In addition, occasional idosyncratic phrases imply the destruction of the victim: 'I bind these men in tombs' (DTA**55, 87**); 'I do away with him (ἀφανίζω) and bury him under (κατορύττω)' (DT**49**; cf. SGD**48, 49** and AthAg).[25]

The desire to kill is clear in a new text from Carthage (imperial):

III.c.2 δόται ἀcθένιαν | τῃ Aἰ. [... I have discontinued the citation]
5 ἤδη, ταχύ | [κ]αὶ θάṇατον
IV.b.1 Δὸc θάνατον
V.1 Αλ|αcιc

'give debility to A, ... now, quickly, and death. Give death to A., ... quickly ... ?do away ...'.[26]

Carthage has yielded a number of curses against charioteers which seek to inflict great damage on horse and rider, if not death. This is explicit in a Latin curse against charioteers from Hadrametum:

> I charge you, *Daimon*, whoever you are, from this hour, this day, this moment, torment and destroy the horses of the Green and White; kill and mangle the drivers Clarus, Felix, Primulus, Romanus; let them not breathe [again].
>
> (DT**286**=Grant, 241 [3rd AD])

In addition, if the arguments of this thesis are valid, then many more of the tablets seek death for the victims, even if vocabulary specifically related to death or destruction (such as ὄλλυμι) is not mentioned, by virtue of the fact that they curse crucial bodily parts and use vocabulary of physiological/pathological significance. For example, although some have denied that the use of graves and the comparison with the lead is a sympathetic magical technique indicating a desire to destroy the victim,[27] the use of 'chilling' in the AthAg tablets seem to be exactly that. Given the role chilling has in theories of disease (see above, on Suppliants 4 and 5), it seems likely that these tablets are actually seeking after the person's death.[28] In fact, this is explicit in one of them:

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25 'Restrain him until he comes down to Hades' (DT**50** [late?]), may also be relevant. Although it certainly means 'for the rest of his life', Faraone (1991a), n.38, this does not exclude the possibility that death is also included in the curse's desire, cf. AthAg**App**, on my next page.

26 Jordan (1996), **2**.

27 Faraone (1991a), 8–10.

28 The desire to chill the soul, impulse, knowledge, charm, mind, knowledge, reckoning, when read against the physiological understandings of (some of) these terms, sounds rather final, as does wanting them to take on all the characteristics of the corpse: deaf, dumb, mindless,

> As I have written down these names and they grow cold, so, too, let the body and the flesh and the sinews[29] and the bones and the members and the bowels of Tyche, whom Sophia bore, grow cold, that she may no longer rise up, walk around, talk, move about, but let her remain a corpse, pale, weak, paralyzed, chilled until I am taken out of the dark air, rather let her grow exhausted and weak until she dies (γένοιτο μέχρι θανάτου).
>
> **(AthAg*App*)**

Malevolent magic used the dead to bring about people's deaths. When a child was at the point of death, this could raise the suspicion of magic. This, in turn, would raise the fear that the dead were about to take the child into their number, for the dead were the agents who fulfilled such curses (cf. DT**286**=Grant, 241).

2.4 Jesus and Death

It seems that the greater loss of children simply made for a greater sense of loss. Jairus, with no philosophically appropriate decorum, fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to touch his daughter. His distress at his daughter coming to the point of death would arouse the sympathies of the Greco-Roman readers (whether philosophical or not) and cause them to be aligned strongly with his situation as he begs Jesus to come and save his daughter by bringing her back from the point of death.

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harmless. The use of underworld language (e.g. 'unilluminated air of oblivion') may reinforce this point, although this refers to the underworld abode of the one invoked. ἀφανίζω is also used, which Faraone (1991a), n.38, translates 'I do away with ...'.

29 In view of the arguments above on Suppliant #4, I have changed Jordan's rendering of νεῦρα as 'muscles'.

5. Suppliant #8: The Bleeding Woman (5:24b–34)

1. Text to Reader: A Woman Saved

Despite a brief appearance in this scene, the disciples are evaluated negatively since they act in opposition to Jesus. This prevents them being strongly aligned with the readers, who are, once again, aligned with the suppliant.

Jesus' journey to save Jairus' daughter on the brink of death is suddenly interrupted by a very powerful description of a woman in desperate physical and social circumstances (vv.25–26). She had existed with a flow of blood for the last twelve years; suffered much at the hands of doctors and lost all her means; and instead of being made better, she had only become worse. Despite her major physical need, this suppliant had been thoroughly exploited by the ones from whom she had sought help. Although in a different sense, she, like Jairus' daughter had also been brought to the end of her life. The reason why this detailed description of this woman is introduced becomes clear when the narrator reveals that she was in the crowd pressing around Jesus as he headed for Jairus' home.

The scene is focalised through the woman. Already her description has privileged the readers with information above that of the characters. As the action begins, an inside view of aural perception[1] continues the alignment (v.27, ἀκούσασα), by explaining how the woman came to be in the crowd. The readers are already located in the crowd (v.24) and now they travel with the woman as she emerges from the crowd to (secretly) touch Jesus' garment from behind (v.27b). Their alignment is completed by the explanation of her motives (v.28),[2] which, as a report of the woman's interior speech, powerfully reduces the distance between them. The extremely close alignment is continued by giving the readers the privileged information that she was cured (v.29a)

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1 Fowler, 121.

2 The γάρ clause provides explicit commentary; Fowler, 95, cf. 92.

and yet another inside view revealing her perception of her cure at the moment it occurred (v.29b).

At this point, where the previous narrative expectations may suggest that some response is appropriate (1:27, 31–34; 1:45; 2:12; 5:20), a sudden change of perspective occurs. So far, because the readers have been so strongly aligned with the woman, Jesus has been relegated to a figure on the edge of their vision; someone approached from behind. Suddenly the narrator changes the perspective by providing an inside view of Jesus, so that the woman's action can be viewed from his perspective (v.30): he had experienced it as a drain of power.

This new perspective does not disalign the reader from the woman, however, but simply promotes further understanding of what had happened to her, as well as launching the quest for the toucher. Rather than being 'granted Jesus' perspective as he turns in the middle of the thronging crowd and asks who had touched him',[3] the readers have been so closely aligned with the woman that, when Jesus turns in crowd, they are not realigned with him, but it is as if he is now looking for the readers as well! His question (v.30b) indicates that there is some distance between him and the readers, for they know something that even Jesus does not know and Jesus is seeking after exactly this information.

This scene gives the readers a view of the action shared only with the narrator.[4] This means that the solution to the various tensions in the story resides in the readers, who must await both Jesus and the woman discovering each other in order to discover what the readers already know. Given these dynamics, the disciples' declaration that the quest is impossible (v.31) functions as a blockage to the successful resolution of the story. This creates distance between the readers and the disciples, who now represent an obstacle to be overcome. The disciples' statement reveals their utmost ignorance of what is going on around them. They 'have not the slightest idea of what is happening in

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3 Fowler, 69.

4 Fowler, 126.

their midst, but [the readers] understand completely.'[5] So on this rare occasion when the disciples are actually present in a healing/exorcism story, they are at the opposite end of the spectrum to the readers: they know nothing, Jesus and the woman know some things, but the readers know it all. There is absolutely no 'strong identification' forged between the disciples and the readers; the strong alignment is reserved for the suppliant.

This alignment continues as the woman's confession is reported in a series of inside views (v.32) showing her emotions (fear and trembling), and a reminder of her knowledge that she had been cured (v.33). The readers travel with her to the moment of truth in which the narrative tension is resolved by Jesus and the woman finding out the information the readers already know. This forges the links between the three and the readers then become observers, hearing Jesus' final pronouncement to the woman (v.34). For twelve years nothing has come to this woman for free, but this time things are different.[6] The woman has been saved by her faith and she is dismissed in peace, henceforth to be healed from her affliction.

The significance in the narrative will only finally be known when the final part of the sandwich reveals what happened with Jairus' daughter. But already the intercalation suggests various points of comparison between the woman and the synagogue ruler. He was a prominent leader who approached Jesus and asked him to come and touch his daughter that she might be saved and live. The woman, from the other end of the social scale — thanks to her exploitation by others —, comes from behind and touches Jesus so that she too might be saved (v.28). She is 'saved' and told that this is because of her faith. This pronouncement becomes significant in what follows, for she becomes a paradigm against which the readers will evaluate the synagogue official in matters of salvation.[7]

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5 Fowler, 94.

6 Kahl, 71f.

7 Kahl, 75.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Bleeding and Death

2.1.1 The Illness

The woman clearly suffered a chronic bleeding disorder, but, once again, precise diagnosis of its cause is not as important as gaining a greater understanding of the effects of her illness upon her life. Unlike modern commentators, the narrator does not mention the issue of purity at all.[8] It is also probably inaccurate to talk of her bleeding as if it were menstruation, although I have done so here on the assumption that the ancient writers were even less likely to make 'proper' modern medical distinctions and her disorder would have been at least placed in the same category. She would also be regarded as barren.[9] In addition, the long period of suffering, her worsening condition, and the poverty brought about by the many attempts to treat the condition receive particular emphasis from the narrator.

2.1.2 Bleeding to Death?

The Hippocratic doctors (Hipp. *Diseases I*.3) regarded 'a haemorrhage in a woman' (γυναικὶ ῥόος αἱματώδης, cf. v.25) amongst those diseases considered 'to be inevitably long' (μακρὰ τάδε ἀνάγκη εἶναι), and those which were 'uncertain with regard to mortality' (ἐνδοιαστὰ τὰ τοιάδε ἀπολλύναι τε καὶ μή). Twelve years was a long time to live with an uncertain mortality, especially since copious menstruation was also supposed to lead to other diseases (*Aph*. 5.57). Menstrual blood was accorded negative properties, including some ability to kill, which may have 'made it all the more attractive to magicians',[10] although it makes a rather minor appearance in the actual spells (PGM XXXVI.321–32 [4th AD]; LXII.76–106 [3rd AD], see below). To the degree that the woman's condition was regarded as menstrual, she may have been

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8 See Kahl, 66f.

9 Cf. Aubert, 434.

10 Aubert, 431, citing ancient literature. Cf. Pliny *HN* 7.63–67, 11.44, 17.266, 19.176, 28.78–80.

regarded as being some kind of 'carrier' of death, but this is admittedly speculative in the Greek context.[11]

Her barrenness is easily associated with death, by virtue of it being the death of the line and, because it does not produce life, the barren womb is naturally described as being dead, or destroyed (cf. Eur. *Andr.* 157f., διόλλυται). Her bleeding for twelve years had effectively killed off her progeny.

2.1.3 Bled to Death

Being a female, she was likely to progress right through the 'protocol' (physician: gods: magician) for gynaecological problems were particularly difficult. Greek medicine excelled at external medicine, ie. the setting of fractures and the healing of wounds, but became less sure of itself as it moved towards internal medicine, especially when dealing with the hollow organs such as the womb. When the doctors failed, women could turn to gods such as Isis,[12] or Asklepios,[13] but we also know that their problems were of great interest for the magicians.[14]

By the time the woman came to Jesus, many doctors had already failed, making her condition even worse. This represents the harsh reality of the ancient world (cf. P.Oxy**1381**), not just a 'well-known literary motif' (cf. 9:18).[15] The physicians may have simply failed to check the normal course of the disease, but the description suggests that her worsened condition resulted from their attempts at healing. It is hardly

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11 It is certainly Semitic, for menstrual emissions were 'synonymous with the loss of the life force within the woman's body. Blood is, after all, the *nefesh* (Dt 12:23)', Feldman, 37. Fear of menstrual blood as a polluting force was not a strong feature of ancient Greek culture, only appearing in late sacred laws of non-Greek cults, Parker, 101f.

12 Isis, was especially regarded as the one in charge of sexual relations, length of pregnancy, and birth (*IG* XII.5 739.36–39 [1st BC]; *I.v.Kyme* 41.18–20, [1st BC/AD]; *IG* XII.5 14.17–21 [2nd/3rd AD]; SEG XII.316, XXXIV.622, 626f. [Imperial period]).

13 Cf. P.Oxy 1381 (2nd AD). Gynaecological conditions, together with eye complaints, are the most frequent amongst the Epidauros miracles, which were generally chronic conditions which the doctors had not been able to cure; see *NewDocs2*, 11–23.

14 See the convenient discussion in Aubert. Magic could be enlisted in the attempt to cure bleeding disorders; e.g. the late Coptic spells (PDM xiv.953–55; 961–65; 970–77; 978–80; 981–84); and engraved stones ACBM.**73, 76, 24** cf. SMA pl. 6, 135; ACBM.**27, 26, 28** and MES.**38**.

15 It is Theißen's motif 8, Theißen (1983), 51f.; cf. Jn 5:5; Lucian *Abdic.* 7; D.L. 8.69; *AJ* 1.166–169 (contrast 1Sam 16:14–23, see Duling, 4f.); GenApoc 20:18.

surprising that the medicine of the day had the potential to make things worse for patients. Many of their remedies are now known to be useless and many downright dangerous. Women were apparently over represented amongst the patients treated with drugs,[16] and since there was (and still is) a fine line between a drug and a poison, this may have been an additional factor in the woman's decline.[17]

The ancient doctors were aware of the tendency of their profession to create a bad image amongst the laymen (cf. Hipp. *Reg.Ac.Dis.* 8) — sometimes the profession was explicitly cursed.[18] In acute diseases, the physicians were not prepared to take the blame when 'the patient is overcome by the magnitude of his disease', but only if 'the physician treats either incorrectly or out of ignorance' (Hipp. *Aff.* 13). As for this woman's chronic condition, the writer of *The Art* would probably argue that the physicians should not have been treating her at all, for incurable conditions did not belong to the physician's art — which was, by definition, to cure the curable (Hipp. *Art* 3, 8)! But she had evidently fallen into the hands of a series of unscrupulous physicians who kept treating her to the limit of her financial resources. Some readers may have agreed with Heraclitus (fr. 58) that it was questionable to earn money from medicine anyway, but all would recognise that, in this case, the physicians had gone too far.

Although the text says nothing about her use of magicians, the Greco-Roman audience would also know that many of them would gladly join the physicians in assisting her towards financial ruin. Philostratus mentions that athletes, merchants, and especially lovers used magic, whether or not it was successful, and in the process they were relieved of vast sums of money, without it helping at all (*VitAp.* 7.39; cf. Pl. *Leg.* 10).

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16 As Singer and Wasserstein (1970b), 662f., conclude from the fact that most of the 300 pharmaceuticals listed in the ancient works are in works on the treatment of women.

17 Cf. male-directed aphrodisiacs which had the unfortunate side-effect of paralysing or even killing the lover, Faraone (1992).

18 SGD124 =Gager81 (4th/3rd BC) curses 17 physicians, perhaps a Pythagorean medical practice.

This woman had been brought to economic ruin in her endeavour to find salvation. She could say to her 'helpers' what the poor man could say when his patrons charged him what they thought was a just return: 'This is sport to you, but death to me' (Arist. *EE* 1243[a]20). This woman was not only bleeding to death, but had been bled to death. Unscrupulous men had exploited her need and brought her to economic death.

2.2 Bleeding and the Dead

Rather surprisingly, the woman's precise condition scarcely receives representation in the curse tablets, although in general terms, curses against women were a substantial part of ancient magical practice.

> In a society in which survival was a day-to-day struggle, with a high infant mortality rate and a short life expectancy at birth serving as a constant reminder of the precariousness of life, the reproductive functions of women were highly valued; all sexual and physiological dysfunctions were considered threats to society. In this context, the womb was viewed as a potential target of undesirable influences from occult powers, against which it needed the protection of specific gods and demons.[19]

This receives endorsement from 'the abundance of prophylactic material, spells, and amulets that make up the bulk of our evidence for uterine magic',[20] on the assumption that what is magically protected was magically attacked, as well as from hints in the literature.[21]

As far as I am aware, there are no *defixiones* specifically causing female bleeding disorders. Perhaps bleeding would be a result of the first-century AD curse (DT **42b**) against various parts of a body — possibly female, since breasts are also cursed —, which includes an attack on the pudenda (αἰδοῖον). In addition, the numerous curses against a victim's family, or their wife (eg. DT **190**) sought some condition causing barrenness, such as this, as is sometimes made explicit (SGD **21**).[22]

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19 Aubert, 425f.

20 Aubert, 426.

21 *Od*. 4.230, 10.394; Eur. *Andr*. 32f., 157f., 205, 355f.; *Med*. 717f; Cic. *Clu*. 31; Pliny *HN* 25.25.

22 Barrenness has a long history as a curse, Aubert, 441, and is also a feature of funerary imprecations, Strubbe, 43.

There is also one spell (3rd AD), however, which should be regarded in the same category as the *defixiones* because it explicitly seeks a bleeding episode.

> "Let the genitals and the womb of her, NN, be open, and let her become bloody by night and day." And [these things must be written] in sheep's blood,[23] and recite before nightfall, the offerings (?) ... first she harmed ... and bury it near a sumac,[24] or near ... on a slip of papyrus'
>
> (PGM LXII.103–106)

Although the spell could be a cure for amenorrhea, it is possible that it was a malevolent spell, either to cause menorrhagia, which would be bad enough, or, because the Greek medical writers thought that a return of the menses or a menorrhagia would terminate a pregnancy, to cause an abortion.[25] Such a curse would be used to deprive an enemy of progeny.[26]

On the basis of such slim evidence it is impossible to show that curses inflicting bleeding disorders (if more than one existed!) used the agency of a ghost for their implementation.[27] But the protective charms show that the fear of magical attack would also lie behind gynaecological problems. Since these attacks normally enlisted the agency of the spirits of the dead, as did curses against the family, this woman's condition may also mean that she would be seen to be under the sway of the dead.

2.3 Turning to Someone New

The ongoing social consequences of her condition (her ill-treatment at the hands of many; the loss of all her resources; the persistent lack of any cure) must have made this woman's distress almost unbearable. In such a situation, when medicine has failed so dismally, it would be perfectly natural for her to turn elsewhere for help. She had heard of a man doing marvellous things for those who were suffering like her (v.27),

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23 A better reading is αἰσχρῷ αἵματι, 'with menstrual blood'; cf. Aubert, 430 n.14, improving PGM.

24 Ῥοῦς could mean either 'flow, stream' or the fruit 'sumac', which was recognised to have pharmacological applications as a cure for various gynaecological ailments; Aubert, 433f.

25 So Aubert, 434.

26 Aubert, 435.

27 PGM LXII.76–106 has some 'chthonic' features: the use of blood; recitation before nightfall; the burial of the charmed papyrus.

magical sounding things. She could not afford any more fees — for physician or for magician — and so, she came to Jesus to do what so many others were doing. She simply pressed onto him from the crowd (cf. 3:7–12), hoping that she would be saved at last.

Her touch of Jesus' garment brings instant knowledge of success; the source of her flow has been stopped. Her living death was over: she had been saved from death. If her scourge (μαστίξ, v.34) was due to some magical attack, it too was now over: she had been saved from the clutches of the dead. Her faith in Jesus had brought life, where once there was only death.

6. Suppliant #7b: The Synagogue Ruler (5:35–43)

1. Text to Reader: A Daughter Raised from the Dead

Three disciples are present in this scene (v.37) but they are treated neutrally and no textual devices encourage any strong identification with them. At the most, the readers are their fellow-travellers, but this is only because the disciples travel with the suppliant with whom the readers are still aligned, as in the first part of the scene.

The juxtaposition of Jesus' words of compassion to the woman and the news of the girl's death (v.35) causes a mixture of emotions. After such strong alignment with the woman, when Jesus makes her secret healing public and so heralds her return to public life, the expected response of joy or amazement which had been delayed once already (v.29) and is expected again (v.34), is displaced by the arrival of the bad news. This causes a re-reading of the woman's story, for her good news has become the cause of bad news for Jairus,[1] for her interruption of the journey home caused the delay which has now led to the child's death. This mixture of joy turned to sadness fills the scene with even greater poignancy and the news of the child's death with greater tragedy, all of which promotes even greater sympathy for the synagogue ruler's desperate situation.

The tragedy is reinforced by the rhetorical question at the conclusion of the message, which voices ordinary common sense: 'why trouble the teacher any more?' (v.35b). The readers recall that, even when the girl was at the point of death, there was hope. Now that Jesus has shown the ability to cure an illness the physicians had found incurable (5:24b–34), the readers have no doubt that he would have been able to cure her too. But now she is dead, all hope is superfluous. This question offers a potential closure for the scene: death is the end of all hopes and even Jesus can do nothing.

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1 Kahl, 72, observes that what is life for one is death for the other.

The focus then falls upon Jesus: he is the subject of almost all the remaining verbs and there are two reports of his perception, one aural (v.36, παρακούσας ...), one visual (v.38) — although, since he 'sees' a tumult, it is also aural. Neither is a full-blooded 'inside view'.[2] The first comes after the news from home was reported to Jairus. After the readers are permitted to overhear, it is then reported that Jesus also overheard. Instead of moving the readers inside Jesus, this has the opposite effect of moving him towards them, enabling him to overhear what they have already overheard. In other words, they are still focalised with Jairus which enables them to hear Jesus addressing his situation as if it were theirs. The second is another example of a description of a person's reaction to external circumstances also obvious to the observer. The tumult in the house was public knowledge and obvious as soon as Jesus and his companions entered. To say that Jesus 'saw' it is not necessarily providing an 'inside view'. Especially since the verb used has connotations of gazing upon a spectacle, when the narrator says that 'he looked upon a tumult' (v.38, θεωρεῖ θόρυβον), it is probably an external description indicating that Jesus (paused and) gazed upon the scene before he acted.[3] It seems likely that the readers are still focalised through the suppliant, not through Jesus. Despite the *focus* of the action being upon Jesus, the readers nevertheless remain *focalised* through the suppliant, observing what Jesus does on his behalf from his vantage point.

To return to the scene, in response to the message from home, Jesus speaks to the synagogue ruler (v.36). Jairus was present when Jesus told the woman from the crowd that her faith had saved her (v.34). He had wanted Jesus to save his daughter (v.23), but the opportunity to do so has passed by; his daughter has died, what can be done now? Jesus tells him to 'stop fearing' (μὴ φοβοῦ) and to keep on believing

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2 *Pace* Fowler, 114, 121.

3 This classical meaning of θεωρέω cannot be automatically assumed for NT texts. However, the data is insufficient in Mark to demonstrate that it does the work for tenses of ὁράω not represented, as it does for some NT authors; and it is not used as a synonym for other verbs of seeing (not even in 5:15f., *pace* Michaelis, 345). Contextual considerations suggest that Mark retains the classical sense, which is admitted for 15:40 (Michaelis, 346); most likely for 5:15, 38; 12:41; 15:47 and 16:4; but less certain in 3:11, where it depends upon the immediacy of the spirits' action.

instead (μόνον πίστευε), even in the face of death. The contrast between fear and faith recalls the scene on the boat (4:40) when Jesus suggested that if the disciples had had faith they would not have been afraid of the imminent prospect of death. Here Jairus is told to keep exhibiting the faith that brought him to Jesus in the first place, even though death has removed all hope.

Initially, the reader had expected another call for someone to follow Jesus, but Jesus had been called to follow someone else. This call has now been revoked and, seizing the initiative, Jesus issues the expected 'call', allowing a select group of people to follow with him (v.37, μετ' αὐτοῦ συνακολουθῆσαι). Jesus' limitation on the number of companions (v.37) increases the readers' sense of privilege, for they will also take the journey. When the group arrives at the house, the scene is focused upon Jesus, who 'gazed on a tumult' (θεωρεῖ θόρυβον, v.38), consisting of 'much crying and loud shouting' (κλαίοντας καὶ ἀλαλάζοντας πολλά). The visual and aural images enhance the vividness of the scene, enabling the readers to enter into the shock of the tumult inside Jairus' home. In contrast to the deeply tragic emotions so far in the scene, all this noise, as one writer put it, suggests there is a celebration of death.[4] Jesus asked why they are causing such a tumult and weeping — the direct speech enabling the readers to hear his question for themselves (v.39). Jesus does not seem to have given up hope, for he then baldly states that the girl has not died, but is merely sleeping. The contradiction between this statement and the drift of the scene so far is striking, but the strong sense of sympathy with the suppliant and positive regard for Jesus prevents the readers from reacting like the mourners. Their laughter (v.40a), implying that Jesus is a fool,[5] repels the readers. Jesus removes them from the house and so from the story. Narrowing the group heightens the readers' sense of privilege at being able to accompany Jesus (cf. v.37), his select group, and the parents into the girls' room as observers (v.40).

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4 Kahl, 74.

5 Williams, 63.

Once inside, Jesus did exactly what Jairus originally desired and seized her by the hand (v.41; cf. v.23). This command is preserved in the original tongue adding an atmosphere of mystery.[6] The rendering into Greek is cast as Jesus' direct speech: 'little girl, I say to you, arise'. Given the circumstances, this is nothing other than a command to rise from the dead. There is immediate success: the girl arose (v.42, ἀνέστη) and walked around. A γάρ clause explains her ambulation in terms of her age. It is only at this point that a clearer picture of the girl emerges, whereas previously she has been defined in terms of her relationship to Jairus, i.e. she was his affectionately regarded daughter.

Having expected a response for so long, the readers also join the utter amazement which results (v.42b). Jesus insistently commands that no-one know of what happened, which increases the readers' sense of privilege, and that the girl be given something to eat (v.43), which suggests that she has been returned to ordinary life.

Jairus receives a miracle even after all hoping had stopped. The woman's faith led to her salvation. Jairus was told to have faith and he received salvation for his daughter of a kind even greater than asked for. He had hoped that Jesus might save her and make her live when she was at the point of death. Jesus saved her and made her live, even when she had crossed it.

However, once Jesus encouraged him to keep on believing even in the face of death, the narrative made no more comments about Jairus' faith, which makes it difficult to say that the story is primarily about him being an exemplar of faith.[7] This is certainly an important secondary theme, but, primarily, the story shows Jesus at work; giving life, even to one who had died. Initially, the readers were identified with Jairus in order to have sympathy *with his situation* and the emotions it aroused. When switched to the role of observer, they saw what Jesus did on his behalf, even when the situation had grown much worse. The combined impact of this dynamic encourages the

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6 Cf. Fowler, 108f.

7 So Williams, 112.

readers to be drawn towards Jesus as the one who can deal with their worst tragedy: he can bring life to the dead.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Death: The End

For Homer real life was above the ground and death was a travesty: 'Say not a word in death's favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead' (*Od.* 11.487ff.). Implacable death was a harsh and obvious fact of life:

> Hades, I ween, is not to be soothed, neither overcome, wherefore he is most hated by mortals of all gods.
>
> (*Il.* 9.158–9)

Across centuries to come, literary (e.g. *Il.* 21.106ff.; Aesch. *PV* 235ff.) and inscriptional (οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος, 'no-one is immortal')[8] testimony proclaimed that death was the end for all. Even in the 2nd century AD, Lucian's mockery shows that the general population had not moved too far from the ancient hatred:

> … these things and others still more ridiculous are done at funerals, for the reason that people think death the greatest of misfortunes.
>
> (Lucian *Luc.* 24)

People were completely helpless before death. Even the gods could not protect them (*Od.* 3.236ff.) — 'Why sigh we for our dead sons, when not even the gods have power to protect their children from death?' (*AG* 7.8) — and they abandoned them (Eur. *Hipp.* 1473f.; *Alc.* 22).[9] Not surprisingly, this bred the kind of resignation which said, 'truly there is nothing anyone can do in the face of such things' (P.Oxy 115 [2nd AD]). This comfortless consolation is just like that offered Jairus when he heard the news of his daughter's death (5:35). They were too late: she had gone, and all hope had died with her.

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8 The inscription is on literally hundreds of tombstones across centuries.

9 Cf. Garland, 18, 44.

2.2 The Tragic End of Pain

In tragedy, the pain of life made death a welcome relief. The craving after a long life is despised as folly, for it simply leads to more misery:

> Until at last the Deliverer comes
> Who sets things right for everyone,
> When the messenger of Hades extends an invitation
> To a wedding without music or dancing?
> Death is the end.
>
> Never to have been born at all:
> None can conceive a loftier thought!
> And the second-best is this: once born,
> Quickly to return to the dust.
> Youthful folly passes away,
> And already distresses have begun;
> Trouble and pain,
> Envy, strife, struggle, war,
> And slaughter, until at last
> The worst of all appears,
> Helpless old age, unaccompanied
> By praise, by love, or by friends,
> The wretchedness of the world one's only guide.
>
> (Soph. *OC* 1213ff.)

Given the pains of life 'Birth should be lamented, death rejoiced over' (Eur. *Cresphontes* fr. 449), especially when a loved one has already died 'For death is sweetest so With dear dead to lie low' (Eur. *Supp*. 1000–08). The tragic nature of human life made it difficult to see anything better:

> The life of man is all suffering, and there is no rest from pain and trouble. There may be something better than this life; but whatever it be, it is hidden in mists of darkness.
>
> (Eur. *Hipp*. 189)

This perspective also made its way into Comedy:

> Everyone says that so-and-so is *makaritēs*, he's passed away, gone to sleep. He's a *eudaimōn* (fortunate) fellow because he no longer feels any pain.
>
> (Ar. *Tagēnistai*)[10]

Pliny's *Natural History* shows the sentiments were still current in the first century, when he says, 'Nature has granted man no better gift than the shortness of life', and

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10 Translation: Garland, 9.

again, 'Most miraculous and also frequent, are sudden deaths (this is life's supreme happiness)' (*HN* 7.50 and 53). On such views, Jairus' daughter would be deemed fortunate to have avoided the full extent of pain that could have been hers.

This sense of 'death as deliverer' probably lies behind Socrates' famous last words: 'Krito, we owe a cock to Asklepios. See that it is paid' (Pl. *Phd.* 118A), which 'are perhaps intended to signify the philosopher's belief that death was a cure for life, since Asklepios was the god of healing.'[11] But the philosophers, as is only proper for those who ought to study 'nothing but dying and being dead' (*Phd.* 64A), also took the discussion into questions of the afterlife.

2.3 Philosophical Views of Death

Although Lucian mocked those who thought that death was 'the greatest of misfortunes' (*Luc.* 24), Socrates had been more agnostic, saying that 'no-one knows what death is, not even whether it is not for man the greatest among all goods' (Pl. *Apol.* 29A). His logic led him to recognise death as one of two states: a dead person is either the same as nothing, not having any kind of sensation of anything, or, death is the removal and relocation of the soul from here to another place' (*Apol.* 40C). These two views were represented by the Epicureans and Stoics on the one hand, and the Platonists on the other.

2.3.1 Death as Nothingness

As far back as Democrites, who spoke of the soul perishing along with the body, there were those who drew the sting of death by proclaiming it to be a natural event at the end of life.

An Ephesian inscription (2nd AD) from an Epicurean meeting hall says that during life they were given release from concern about death.[12] This derived from Epicurus' teaching that the human body dissolved into its component parts and disintegrated at death, and so, in the end, death does not affect a person (D.L. 10.139).

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11 Garland, 20 n.

12 See Horsley (1992), 152f.

If so, then it was eminently sensible to enjoy life while it lasts: 'eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die'. Although this sentiment is ancient, cross-cultural and long-lasting, it was especially linked with Epicureanism.[13]

For the Stoic, although the soul survived for a short time after death, it was eventually absorbed into the impersonal life-force of the universe.[14] The virtuous man is absolutely brave, because pain and death are not evils, and he does not 'eat, drink, and be merry', because pleasure is not a good. The Stoics urged people to detach themselves from life, possessions, and even spouse and children, in order to be able to bid them farewell easily when it came time to die (Epict. *Ench.* 7).

The two groups' scepticism about immortality echoed throughout the Roman world in the first centuries BC and AD. A number of epitaphs show their influence extended beyond the schools: 'we are mortals, not immortals' (CIL 11.**856**); 'when life ends, all things perish and turn to nothing' (CLE **420**); 'We are and were nothing. Look, reader, how swiftly we mortals pass from nothing to nothing' (CLE **1495**); 'I was not, I was, I am not, I don't care' (a recurrent formula). These sentiments may have been 'exceptional',[15] but they were nevertheless a part of the world to which Mark wrote (cf. Acts 17:18, 32), and they represent a self-conscious rejection of anything beyond the grave and an embrace of the resultant nothingness of life, albeit in two distinct forms.

2.3.2 Death as the Relocation of the Soul.

Not everyone was content with death being the end of life. The alternative was to propose that, at death, true life was just beginning. Euripides had allowed the possibility of something more, if only to close it down promptly (Eur. *Hipp.* 189). The middle comic Antiphanes was more positive:

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13 See the references collected in Bolt (1994), 381 n.36 (on Tob 7:10f.); to which can be added Gilgamesh Epic, Tablet X.III.1ff. = ANET, 90; Aesch. *Pers.* 840–2; Eur. *Cyc.* 345f.; Plaut. *Most.* 64f.; Philo *QG* 2.12; Plut. *De I. et O.* 17 (cf. Hdt. 2.78); And the epitaphs: 'and you who live, eat, drink, play, come!' (Geist/Pohl, 164–165 n.435); 'Drink up!, you see what you will come to' (Peek, GV**378**); cf. ζήσας καὶ τρυφήσας ἐν τῷ βίῳ κ[αθ]ὼς εἰδὼς ὅτι ἀπ[οθ]ανεῖν δεῖ, Ramsay**206** (n.d.). Cf. Isa 22:13.; 1Cor 15:32.

14 Toynbee, 36.

15 Toynbee, 34.

> We should not mourn overmuch for those who are dear to us. They are not dead; they have only gone before upon the road that all must travel. Some day we too shall come to the same way, to spend the rest of time in their society.
>
> (Antiph. *Aphrodisius*; Kock fr. 53 = Stob. 124.27)

But it was the Pythagoreans like Plato — so often mocked by the middle comics — who elaborated the possibility. The words of a deceased Orphic initiate[16] not only express the view that the pain of life was over, but also hint that he had gone to another place: 'I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel'.[17] Similarly, Pindar (fr. 131= Plut. *Cons. ad Apol.* 120D) said that our bodies followed the strong call of death, but our εἴδωλον αἰῶνος survived death, for that alone is of divine origin. With such notions in mind, Socrates was tempted to agree with Euripides' question, 'who knows whether to live is to be dead, or to be dead to live?' (*Gorg.* 492E),[18] before discussing the body (σῶμα) as tomb (σῆμα) idea, in which the soul is trapped until released by death.

We have already had cause to mention the Pythagorean notions of the soul being released from the body, with good souls flying to the upper realms and those attracted to the body being purged and/or reincarnated, or simply hovering around the bodily realms which can be traced through Plato's elaboration, on to Plutarch (see above, on Suppliant #1). The death of Socrates proved a great inspiration for such views. He affirmed that 'when death comes to a man, then what is mortal about him, it appears, dies, but what is immortal and imperishable withdraws from death and goes its way unharmed and undestroyed' (Pl. *Phd.* 106E). Hopefully, a good man's soul might then ascend to live 'altogether apart from the body' (ἄνευ τε σωμάτων ... τὸ παράπαν) in celestial bliss (114B–C). This is 'a great hope' (ἡ ἐλπὶς μεγάλη, 114C), which, for the person who has filled his life with the proper pursuits, readies a man for death (cf.

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16 For Orphism, see Rohde, Ch. 10; Nilsson.

17 Harrison, 589.

18 Cf. Heraclitus, in ClemA. *Strom.* 3.3; S.E. 3.230.

63B–C). At this, Socrates says it is time for his friends to go so he can take a bath before he drinks his poison.

Although 'this philosophical teaching was widespread in the ancient world and afforded comfort to many people,'[19] Fronto (100–166 AD) later expressed doubts at the helpfulness of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul when it comes to the death of a child: 'If the immortality of the soul should ever be proved [...] it will not be an answer to the grief felt by parents' (Haines II, 226; cf. 162). Plutarch, however, shows that it was certainly enlisted by its supporters[20] in exactly this context. When his little daughter died while he was away from home, Plutarch wrote to his wife with a range of advice for her comfort (*Cons. ad ux.*). Alongside such practical advice as avoiding those who mourn without decorum, he reminded her of various beliefs that should help her cope with the disaster before them: the hopes that they had gained from the mysteries (611E); the notion that their two-year-old had 'passed to a state where there is no pain' (εἰς τὸ ἄλυπον ἥκουσα, 611D; cf. Ps.-Plato *Ax.* 327A) gained from the philosophical tradition. But his parting words returned to the cluster of ideas associated with the Pythagorean notions of the soul in the afterlife. Because his daughter was only two, she had not grown accustomed to the body and so was more likely to escape to the upper regions, than to be reincarnated in the cycle of rebirth (611E–F).[21]

If a belief in the dissolution of the body led to a greater focus upon the things of this life, the belief in the transfer of the soul promoted the opposite. Itemising the three features of present-life enjoyment which would later become associated with Epicurus, Socrates considers that the philosophical man does not care much for 'the so-called pleasures, such as eating and drinking [... or] the pleasures of love' (*Phd.* 64C). By rising above the body to concerns of the soul, death could be faced without fear (64Eff.; cf. Epicharmus fr. 22 (Diels-Kranz) = ClemA. *Strom.* 4.170). Excessive love

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19 Kaiser and Lohse, 95.

20 The immortality of the soul was the one thing which held together the Middle Platonist school, see Atticus in Eus. *Prep.Ev.* 15.9.2; Young.

21 Cf. Menander: 'He whom the gods love dies young' (Plut. *Cons. ad Apol.* 119E).

of the body caused a soul to be led away to the underworld 'only with violence and difficulty' (*Phd.* 108F), but a pure soul, such as that of Socrates, put up no such resistance (115C) and could calmly 'run the bath' before ending it all.[22]

Since not many would have attained to such philosophical heights,[23] presumably most people did not die without a struggle. For them, perhaps the mysteries offered a better alternative.

2.3.3 The Mysteries

Also promising a relocation of the soul, the mysteries were a source of hope for people facing the pain of their own death, or the death of their children (cf. Plut. *Cons. ad ux.* 611E). The promise of a better lot in the afterlife (Pl. *Resp.* 364E–365A) was a great attraction for some of the Romans:

> ... nothing is better than those mysteries. For by means of them we have been transformed from a rough and savage way of life to the state of humanity, and have been civilised. Just as they are called initiations, so in actual fact we have learned from them the fundamentals of life, and have grasped the basis not only for living with joy but also for dying with a better hope.
>
> (Marcus, in Cicero, *Leg.* 2.14.36)

The basis of this hope was not so much a belief as an action, for, like Orphism,[24] it was based simply upon being initiated.[25] Although the mysteries are shrouded in secrecy,[26] this apparently consisted of a quasi-death which may have been actually life-threatening (Apul. *Met.* 11.21). Lucius explains what occurred during the rite:

> I went to the very boundary between life and death. I crossed the threshold of Proserpina. And after I had passed through all the elements, I returned once again. At the very hour of midnight I saw the sun

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22 Garland, 66, detects a change in Plato, yielding a more cautious attitude: compare *Phd* 63C: 'I am hopeful that there is something for the dead, and, as men of old have declared, that it is something better for the good than for the wicked'; with the more tentative *Apol.* 42A: 'But now the time has come to leave, I to die and you to live, but which of us goes to a better lot is unknown to anyone except God'; cf. *Phd* 115A. The nature of the change depends upon the relative order of the dialogues.

23 Garland, 19.

24 Cf. Pl. *Resp.* 11.364C; Plut. *Quom. adol. poet.* 21F = Soph. fr. 753.

25 Cf. Meyer (1987), 12–13.

26 For example, Eur. *Bac.* 469ff.; Livy 39.10, 13; Diod. 5.48.4, 49.55f.; Plut. *Symp. IV.* #6.1 671D; Paus. 4. *Messenia* 33.5; Apul. *Met.* 11.23; Lucian *Salt.* 15.

> shining with its bright light;[27] I beheld the lower and the higher gods face to face, and I worshiped them in their presence.
>
> (Apul. *Met.* 11.23)[28]

The so-called Mithras liturgy also shows that people turned to the mysteries because they 'request immortality' (cf. PGM IV.475ff.):

> [G]ive me over to immortal birth and, following that, to my underlying nature, so that, after the present need which is pressing me exceedingly, I may gaze upon the immortal beginning with the immortal spirit, [...] that I may be born again in thought.
>
> (PGM IV.502ff.; cf. 645ff).

Here too the rite is recognised as a death-like experience:[29]

> O Lord, while being born again, I am passing away; while growing and having grown, I am dying; while being born again from a life-generating birth, I am passing on, released to death — as you have founded, as you have decreed, and have established the mystery.
>
> (IV.719ff.)

Isis promised Lucius:

> You shall live blessed. You shall live glorious under my guidance; and when you have travelled your full length of time and you go down into death, there also, on that hidden side of earth, you shall dwell in the Elysian Fields and frequently adore me for my favors. For you will see me shining on amid the darkness of Acheron and reigning in the Stygian depths.
>
> More, if you are found to merit my love by your dedicated obedience, religious devotion, and constant chastity, you will discover that it is within my power to prolong your life beyond the limit set to it by Fate.
>
> (*Met.* 11.6)

Since the fate in the afterlife depended on initiation, it is understandable that some initiates apparently obtained a 'pass' to ensure their just deserts in the underworld. A number of gold leaves (i.e. literally) have been discovered in corpses' mouths, in order to identify initiates to Persephone.[30] These indicate that Dionysus, who crossed so many boundaries himself, 'aids in the crossing of what for the classical Greeks was the

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27 This would be in the underworld, where the sun is on its nightly journey.

28 Meyer (1987), 158, comparing the Egyptian *Book of the Dead.*

29 Cf. also Plut. fr. 178 = Stob. 4.52.49.

30 Cf. Dickie; Merkelbach (1975); Merkelbach (1989); Segal (1990); Zuntz, 275–393; Harrison), Ch. 11, esp. 575ff.

greatest of all divisions, the barrier of life and death and between the human and divine.'[31]

2.4 The Will to Live

It seems difficult to erase the basic will to live. Strangely, it can be discerned behind the longing for a short life, the 'eat, drink and be merry' attitude, and even amongst the more resigned philosophers' care for their children, or their promotion of the 'healthy' lifestyle, as much as it can behind people turning to immortality of the soul, or to the mysteries for 'a better hope'. But it screams out loud and strong in the fact that people turned to gods, doctors and magicians in the desperate attempt to stave off death. When it came to death, if the gods could not help (*Od.* 3.236ff.), and medicine would not (cf. Hipp. *Art* 3, 8), then the magicians were left the market. People turned to them in the attempt to 'drag out their life with food and drink and magic spells, trying to keep death out of the way' (Eur. *Supp.* 1109ff.). They may have turned to purpose-built charms like the 'Stele that is useful for all things; it even delivers from death (... ῥύεται καὶ | ἐκ θανάτου)', (PGM IV.1167–1226). But, in one sense, all remedies had this aim and the use of magic should be seen against a general will to live in world where everything seemed to be against this most human of desires.

2.5 Hope

Although Philo may have felt that hope was the 'one thing which is naturally capable of consoling human life' (Philo *Flacc.* 20.176), the Greeks and Romans did not regard hope as at all trustworthy. The Greeks knew that humanity was perennially 'tormented by the two grimmest tyrants: Hope and Fear'[32] (cf. Lucian *Alex.* 8; *Charon* 15; *Demon.* 20). The tragedians recognised the vanity of hopes and despised them as the very things which prevent human beings from seeing their own mortality (Soph.

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31 Segal (1990), 418f.

32 Bickermann (1965), 151.

Aj. 473ff.; Aesch. *PV* 250, 253; cf. Pl. *Gorg.* 523D). Hope was suspect, since it could so easily be revealed as false and empty.[33]

However, as Jairus had discovered, the two tyrants seem to travel together. His daughter had died and Jesus told him not to fear, only believe. Jesus asked for Jairus' trust, but what was the hope he could offer in the face of death? At this point was not any hope as empty as any other, no matter which of the two standard options now lay before him? Should he recognise that he has to live with the pain of his daughter's end, and either live it up before he dies too, or Stoically seek to lay aside the pain even before his end comes, because this is in line with some supposed divine reason? Or should he embrace Socrates' 'strong hope' that his daughter's soul is immortal, and, sooner or later, it may, perhaps, return to its origins and Jairus, if all goes well, may one day attain to the same regions where his soul will reunite with that of his daughter? Does Jesus offer some different hope to Jairus, and, through him, to the Greco-Roman readers? A hint in this direction comes when Jesus ignores the advice to stay away. On either of the usual scenarios, this advice was completely sound, for any comfort he may have had in regard to the afterlife could be offered at a distance (cf. Plut. *Cons. ad ux.*). But instead, Jesus tells Jairus to continue to believe and then sets out for the house of mourning.

2.6 Resurrection?

2.6.1 The Denial of Resurrection

'Resurrection' is most commonly found in non-biblical Greek literature in a statement of the impossible: the dead are not raised.[34]

> Thou, hapless queen, fret not thine heart away Without avail. Menelaus hath his doom, And thy dead husband cannot live again.
>
> (Eur. *Helen* 1285–87)

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33 For a similar Roman distrust of Hope; cf. Clark and Walsh.

34 Wedderburn, 181. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 24:551, 756, cf. 21.56; Aesch. *Eum.* 647f.; cf. *Ag.* 565ff.; 1361; Soph. *El* 138f.; Hdt. 3.62.3f.; cf. 2 Sam 12:22f.; Ps 88:10–12; Aristotle uses it in a *reductio ad absurdum* (*De anima* 1.3.406^{b}3-5), not even allowing the theoretical possibility.

However, despite this impossibility, there were a number of exceptions in the form of resuscitations, i.e. restorations of the dead to life on this earth, followed by eventual death.[35] Pliny was also aware of reports of people coming back from the dead, but since he does so in the context of a discussion on the signs of approaching death (*HN* 7.51) and uses them to illustrate that 'in the case of a human being no confidence must be placed even in death' (7.52), he evidently considers the diagnosis of 'death' to be mistaken, despite the time taken for it to come out. He also knows of 'cases of persons appearing after burial' but does not discuss them because his subject is 'works of nature, not prodigies' (7.52).

The eschatological myths of Plato (*Resp* 10.614B)[36] and, following his model, Plutarch (*De sera* 563ff.) have characters who undergo a 'resurrection' which enables them to speak of their other-worldly journeys — with precedent in the various under-worldly journeys in older literature. So temporary restorations to life were 'not completely alien even to the Greeks',[37] even though these are mostly not strictly 'from the dead' for they have not been buried and so have not entered the realm of the dead.[38] Thus, although it would be deemed unusual, Jesus' raising of the girl to a temporary existence before she died again would certainly be within the conceptual boundaries of the Greco-Roman readers.

2.6.2 Magical Resurrection?

After putting out a distinctly 'unphilosophical' group of mourners, who may have genuinely felt the tragedy of the occasion,[39] Jesus arrived at the girl's bedside. The foreign words Ταλιθα κουμ' added a magical atmosphere (v.41), since the magical spells overflow with 'foreign-sounding, meaningless names and poly-syllables'

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35 Wedderburn, 181–183 for examples of restoration of life to this world.

36 Wedderburn, 168-9.

37 Hengel (1974), 2, 131 n.575, referring to Pliny *HN* 7.124; Apul. *Flor.* 19; Philostr. *VitAp.* 4.45

38 Wedderburn, 165, making an exception for Lazarus, Alcestis and Eurydice.

39 Plutarch's reference to the wailers (*Cons. ad ux.* 609E–F) seems to indicate that this was normal, as opposed to philosophical, rather than false/artificial as opposed to genuine.

(βαρβαρικά τινα καὶ ἄσημα ὀνόματα καὶ πολυσύλλαβα, Lucian *Men.* 9). So, is he using magic to raise the dead?

The traditional wisdom said that this would be highly unusual, if not impossible. In fact, as the case of Asklepios showed, it was forbidden by the gods (Aesch. *Ag.* 1010ff.; cf. *Eum* 647f.). Yet this did not prevent the magicians from trying. In the second century, Apuleius told of an Egyptian who reanimates a corpse (Apul. *Met.* 2.28–30) and Mark will soon report a well-connected suspicion that Jesus had done the same thing with John the Baptist (6:14–16). A number of spells have survived which call upon the corpse to 'rise' (cf. ἔγειρε, v.41b),[40] so is this what Jesus is doing here?

In actual fact, these cases are not so much 'resurrections' as reanimations, or the recalling of the corpse-spirit in order to provide a *daimonic* assistant to do the magician's bidding. So, for example, the Egyptian prophet in Apuleius invokes the Sun to release the spirit of the man for just long enough to allow justice to be done, and the corpse speaks about what had truly happened. Other spells also allowed corpses to be questioned (PGM IV.1990ff.; 2140–44).

However, the occasional charm may ask for something more:

> Resurrection of a dead body (ἔγερσις σώματος νεκροῦ). I conjure you, spirit coming in air, enter, inspire, empower, resurrect (διαέγειρον) by the power of the eternal god, this body; and let it walk about this place, for I am he who acts with the power of Thayth.
>
> (PGM XIII.278–283 [AD 346])

What was desired here? Διαέγειρον may indicate it is simply another re-animator of the corpse-*daimon*, and, since it asks for the body to walk around the room, it may

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40 2nd AD: DT198.10 ἐξεγέρθητι; ≤3rd AD: SuppMag46.6f: διέγι|ρέ μοι σεαυτὸν νέκυς δαίμων; 3rd AD: SuppMag39: δ<ι>εγείρω [τὸν] | δαίμονά σου]; SB 4947: ὁρκίζω σε, νεκυδαῖμον, καὶ δ'ἐγείρω [τὸν] | δαίμονά σου, in which the name of the person is addressed; DT 16 I 15: ἐξεγ(ε)ίρ(ε)ῖς; DT 22.3, 43, 26.3, 31, 29.29, 30.35, 31.28, 37.29: ἔγ(ε)ιρον δὲ μοι σύ; 3/4th AD: SuppMag49: ἔγειρέ μοι σεαυτόν; 5th AD: SuppMag45 ἐξορκίζω ἐγείρεσθαι δέμονες, addressed to corpses; SuppMag72 also has ἔγειρε, but this is probably addressed to the lover.

See also: PGM IV.1468, 1475, 1479, 1480, 1494, 1495: 'Send up the phantoms of the dead' Jordan (1994b), 137; with the naming of the person addressed: SuppMag44 = GMPT CVII (3rd/4th AD) a named ἄωρος; SuppMag47 Antinous, but probably not Hadrian's favourite; Cf. 'he can get there' PGM IV.52f.; PGM IV.2215 he will come to life, i.e. one of the untimely dead; PGM XIII.1076 to call phantoms; PGM XII.201–69 to call for helpers; PGM XVIIb.1–23? rouse again; PGM VIII.64–110 send up a prophet from the realm of the dead.

even be simply interested in a magical performance, rather than a restoration to life.[41] One of the Aramaic bowl texts provides another ambiguous example. Admitting that the meaning of the lines are obscure, the editors suggest that it may be a spell protecting a tomb (cf. ll. 1–3, 8).[42] However, since the spell sought 'to make his body alive' (N-S **Bowl 4**.8), it could be a spell desiring to bring one who had died back to life again. Neither of these spells give any hint about how they were used, or their efficacy, but they may well testify to magicians who were well aware of the great tragedy of death and, not content to provide spells merely to stave it off, offered charms to bring someone back from the dead.

2.6.3 Raised from the Dead

Since the time of Alexander, the Greeks had been fascinated by things Oriental — the Magi, the Chaldeans, the Indians, and even the Jews. Plutarch was well aware of the Chaldean expectation of some kind of future new world, in which 'those who are resurrected require no food and cast no shadows' (Plut *De I et O* 370C), even if he considers such views as rather fabulous. His Pythagorean notions of the soul being captive in the body and real life being that of the soul above prevented him from fully appreciating such views. For him, it was the pure souls above who cast no shadows, those who have been liberated from the body (cf. *De sera.* 564D) not resurrected bodies in a renewed earthly situation. He can see no sense in taking the body to heaven (*Rom.* 28.7f.).

However, when Jesus stood at the bedside of the girl, he orchestrated the reanimation of a person, not just of her voice or her corpse-*daimon* — or even her body. Once she had been raised, two things occurred. Firstly, she got up and walked around (v.43). This is certainly not the action of a corpse (contrast: 'that she may no longer rise up, walk around, talk, move about, but let her remain a corpse, ...' AthAg**App**), but it is conceivable that it may still be read as a powerful reanimation of the body. But this possibility is dismissed when Jesus orders some food for her, for

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41 For other magical 'gimmicks', see PGM VII.167–185; XIb.1–5.

42 Naveh and Shaked, 152.

neither ghosts, nor dead bodies — even if given the ability to dance around a room —, needed to eat (cf. Lk 24:39–43). The girl had rejoined bodily life.

4. Impact of the Narrative

The bleeding woman scene has taught the reader that faith saves, but here the call to follow Jesus is into a situation beyond all hope, into the jaws of death itself. What can faith do in the face of the grave?

The previous main section (1:14–4:34) had shown several significant miracles in which Jesus brought people out from the shadow of death. Then, as the waves pounded their boat, the frightened disciples had asked whether Jesus cared that they were perishing (4:38) and he had demonstrated that he did. He then brought a man out from the tombs and sent him back to a new life (5:1–20). Now he had actually raised a dead girl to life. The accumulating picture is that Jesus brought people out from the shadow of death; back from a living death; back from the brink of death; back from amongst the dead; and now back from death itself. Mark's story shows him plundering the domain of the prince of *daimons*. He is defeating death.

7. Galilean Leadership (6:1–7:23)

Throughout Mark 4:35–8:26, the question of Jesus' identity is kept on the agenda by presenting a variety of different answers to the question 'who then is this?' (4:41). The question is asked in a slightly different form in Nazareth (6:2) and the answer is supplied in terms of the very human background that Jesus left in order to do the will of God (1:9; 3:20f, 31–35). The report of the townsfolk's lack of faith issues in the enigmatic statement that Jesus could not do any miracles, apart from some healings. This suggests that (mere) healings were not considered 'powers' in the same sense as the miracles just prior to this scene, i.e. those which explicitly and powerfully demonstrate his power over the dead.

Although persistently misread as simply the account of John the Baptist's death and therefore something of an oddity at this point in the narrative, the next section is also concerned with Jesus' identity. The mission of the twelve (6:7–13) causes Herod to ask questions about Jesus (vv.14–16) which leads into the story of Herod having John killed (vv.17–29).[1] When he hears of the mission, he explains the powers at work in Jesus (NB.) in terms of John having been raised from the dead. The 'demise of John' story is then provided as an explanation (γάρ) of Herod's opinion about Jesus.[2] The story sketches the background of Herodias' hatred of John and her desire to kill him (vv.17–20), before telling the events of the fateful dinner-party when she seized her opportunity (vv.21–28). The narration of the grizzly events focuses upon the removal of John's head: the girl asks her mother about her reward and is told to ask for the head (v.24b); she does so (v25); the king sends the *speculator* to bring John's head (v.27a); he beheads him in the prison (v.27b); brings the head on a plate to the girl (v.28a); and the girl gives it to her mother (v.28b) to complete the revenge sequence. Herodias' hatred for John had found its opportunity and Herod had been manipulated

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1 Cf. Gundry, 303.

2 So, too, Gundry, 304.

into killing John, by removing his head. This, somehow, provides the explanation for Herod's explanation of Jesus' powers in terms of John being raised.

Despite the fact that so few have noticed it,[3] and so many have ignored it, it seems that the narrative is saying clearly that Herod considered Jesus to be a magician who has raised John's spirit in order to capitalise upon its power. This is why the focus is upon John's beheading. A beheaded man, as a βιαιοθάνατος, would make a powerful ghost and be sought after by the magicians. An ἀκέφαλος may have been an additional sub-category of useful ghosts.[4] When Herod suggests that Jesus has 'raised' John, he uses language that regularly appears in the magical material for the summoning of the ghostly *daimon* from its rest in the underworld in order to do the magician's bidding.[5] Herod thinks that Jesus was a magician who has done this and is effectively using John's spirit in his territory. Mark, however, very subtly puts this theory to rest by his mention of John's disciples properly burying his corpse (v.29). John may have been an ἀκέφαλος but he did not remain an ἄταφος. His proper burial would be seen as a ghost-removing activity, indicating to the readers that, in the narrator's opinion, Herod was mistaken. Jesus was not a magician operating by the powers of the dead.

The correct evaluation of Jesus is provided by the conclusion of the mission of the twelve into which the Herod account was intercalated (vv.30–44). Jesus looked at the multitude and saw that they were 'like sheep without a shepherd' (v.34) before teaching them and then feeding them. This is a long-standing kingship image, both inside and outside the Bible. In the person of 'King' Herod, Israel really has 'no shepherd', since his leadership has simply led to the death of God's prophet as dinner-party entertainment. During the exile, Ezekiel had indicted the leaders of Israel for plundering the flock of God and promised that God himself would act as their

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3 See Kraeling; Smith 1978), 33f.; cf. Aune, 1541f. The decisions that the view is 'improbable' (Twelftree [1993]), 208, or 'too subtle' (Gundry, 315), are hardly decisive critiques.

4 Headless *daimons* appear in the spells; see Preisendanz (1950). Cf. decapitated figurines (3rd BC), Faraone (1991b) fig. 7, pl. 5.

5 See on Suppliant #7b, Section 2.6.2.

shepherd. He would not plunder the flock, but he would care for it and feed it (Ezek 34–36) before the resurrection of the dry bones of Israel occurred (Ezek 37). In this scene Jesus plays the role of the expected good shepherd, feeding leaderless Israel.

8. Journey #2: The Heart Problem (6:45–8:10)

The second sea journey begins without Jesus who follows later 'walking on the sea', intending 'to pass them by' (v.48). Both these phrases are reminiscent of language used of God in the OT (Ex 33:19, 22; 34:6). Being at sea in a storm, the disciples sensibly evaluate what they saw and conclude that Jesus is a ghost (φάνταsμα, v.49). Mark says their resultant cry was because they all saw the same thing and were thrown into confusion (ἐταράχθησαν, v.50). In an action also reminiscent of YHWH, Jesus tells them not to be afraid (e.g. Isa 41:14) and, continuing the impression that this scene is a theophany, he uses 'ἐγώ εἰμι', YHWH's self-address (Ex 3:14). When he climbs in the boat, the wind ceased and the disciples were astounded. Mark's narrative commentary (vv.50, 51b–52) stresses the lack of progress made by the disciples since the first sea crossing, for they were afraid in both storms. The first occasion they cried out 'who then is this?', but this time they apparently should have known. Mark explains their astonishment as being due to the fact that they had not understood the significance of the loaves, but their hearts, like Israel's, were hardened. If they had understood the loaves, then they would not have been afraid when they saw Jesus acting with the prerogatives of YHWH. Presumably this means that Jesus' multiplication of loaves also has some theophanic significance. Instead of plundering the flock of God and bringing death, like the false shepherds, as the good shepherd, Jesus feeds the flock of God and brings life from the dead.

When they land, the narrative's final summary statement (6:53–56) tells of amazing events which provoke overwhelming responses to Jesus wherever he went. People were flocking to benefit from his leadership. After σώζω has acquired overtones of being saved from death (5:21–43), the readers would also hear them echoed here when many who touched Jesus found that they were 'saved' (6:56).

Having seen the poverty of the leadership offered by the political Herod in the last subsection, now the poverty of the leadership offered by those holding religious positions in Jerusalem exposed (6:45–8:9). The religious cannot be separated from the political. Under Roman administration of Palestine, those holding 'religious' positions did so by the grace of Rome, and, as with the administration of the imperial cult in other provinces, the religious leadership of Israel had been political for some time. Jesus disputed with the religious leaders from Jerusalem, using Isaiah to expose the hardness of heart (7:6f) which had led them to nullify the word of God (v.13). As he explained this to the disciples, a further word to the crowd stressed how significant the heart problem was (vv.14f.,19). His explanation also indicts the disciples in the same problem suffered by Israel and her leadership: 'thus are you too lacking in understanding?' (οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσύνετοί ἐστε; v.18). By recalling the parables discourse, this underlines the serious nature of the charge. For there the hardening prevented people from receiving forgiveness and lack of understanding through not listening prevented access to the coming kingdom harvest. The 'kingdom' of Herod led to the death of God's prophet and the 'kingdom' of the religious leaders led to the nullification of God's word and of basic human decency (vv.9–13), resulting in every known human evil (vv.21–23). If the disciples were still a part of such hard-heartedness, then they had a long way to go before they are ready for the coming kingdom.

9. Suppliant #9: Exorcism of a Greek (7:24–30)

1. Text to Reader: A *Daimon* Leaves a Greek

The disciples are completely absent from this scene and the readers are drawn towards a Greek woman who acts on behalf of her daughter.

The readers accompany Jesus in his movement from the previous location into the region of Tyre (v.24a) and on into a house. They are supplied with an inside view of Jesus' wishes:[1] he wanted no-one to know (v.24b). Being in the house raises the motif of the insider versus the outsider.[2] Jesus' desire for absolute secrecy, in effect, makes all potential visitors into outsiders. But his secret was out when a woman came to him (v.24c).

'Αλλά introduces a strong contrast with the preceding, indicating that the details about Jesus' whereabouts and desire for secrecy were background to the woman's story. The scene is then focalised through this woman, beginning with an inside view of aural perception[3] (ἀκούσασα, v.25; cf. 5:27), followed by a relative clause introducing extra detail about her circumstances: she had a (beloved? — note the diminutive, θυγάτριον; cf. 5:23) daughter with an unclean spirit. Further alignment comes by recollection of the scene where two 'daughters' had previously gained help from Jesus (cf. 5:23, 34, 35). This woman burst into the privacy of the house, frustrating Jesus' desire for secrecy, and fell at his feet.

The narrator suspends the action with the woman on the floor to introduce a piece of information about her. Although introduced by a δέ parenthesis, one of the weaker signals of explicit commentary,[4] this proves to be extremely important for her story (v.26a): the woman was Greek, or, more particularly, Syrophoenician by race. This is

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1 Fowler, 123f.

2 Fowler, 211.

3 Fowler, 121.

4 Fowler, 116f.

not so much a comment upon her religion, i.e. that she was a 'pagan',[5] but upon her cultural orientation. This explicit comment to the reader hints that the proper understanding of the story will be connected with the woman's Greek-ness.

The action continues to be narrated from her point of view, although, since her request is given in reported speech, a degree of distance from the readers is introduced (v.26b), moving them towards the role of observers. Jesus' reply is in direct speech, enabling the readers to hear his words as the woman would have done (v.27). Given the narrative portrayal of Jesus so far, his reply comes as something of a shock and forces the issue of ethnicity. Since parables were his preferred medium for outsiders (4:11), even the form used speaks of rejection.[6] The readers are aware that Jesus has already fed the people with bread as an act of leadership performed by the true shepherd of Israel stepping into the disastrous state of affairs caused by Israel's leadership (6:30–44; cf. 6:34). They have been informed that the disciples' continued state of fear and amazement was due to a lack of understanding of the bread miracle, which was, in turn, due to their hardness of heart (6:52). The image of 'bread' encompasses not only Jesus' teaching, but all that he has to offer — as illustrated here, where the request for exorcism is encompassed by the metaphor. The narrative has been one long description of how Jesus was supplying bread to those in need, but now, when the Greek woman asks for help, he reveals that the 'bread' is for the children (presumably Israel) and it should not be thrown to the dogs (presumably Greeks like her). Jesus saw his prime role as removing the unclean spirits from amongst Israel, rather than from amongst the Greeks. Since the readers have already been aligned with many other suppliants like this woman and have observed Jesus supplying their needs, his reply is shocking. It places distance between him and the reader, which causes some tension and at the same time aligns them further with the woman. Although the woman managed to penetrate into Jesus' secret location, she seems to have little chance of penetrating further to receive the help that she needs. Since his reply speaks of a denial of access which

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5 So Taylor.

6 Williams, 119.

ensures that the outsiders remain outsiders, this distance also moves the readers towards the status of outsiders (cf. 4:10f., 33).

Despite the harsh insult, the woman persists, indicating that her need must be great indeed. Without contradicting Jesus' statement, her reply, also vividly in direct speech, uses his figure of speech to her advantage by suggesting that she only wants some crumbs from the table (v.28) — perhaps reminding the readers of the crumbs that were left over at the feeding miracle.[7] After being shocked by Jesus' remark, the readers cannot help but be impressed by the woman's reply. It not only highlights their own lack of insight, relative to hers, but, because it is so attractive and helps the reader out of their own puzzled state, it also maintains their alignment with her.

Her reply also impresses Jesus, who expressly makes it the basis of the fulfilment of her request and announces the *daimon* had left her daughter (v.29). This statement encourages a reassessment of his previous remark causing such consternation. Since he eventually fulfills the woman's request, this re-reading re-applies the positive regard for Jesus built up across the course of the narrative to this scene, leading the readers to view his reply not as a rejection of the woman, but as a means towards eliciting the required response.

The account ends still focalised through the woman. The readers join her in the discovery of her daughter lying on the bed, no longer troubled by the *daimon* (v.30). Jesus had cast out a *daimon* even from a Greek.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 The Woman's Race

Although the woman is a Syro-Phoenician by race, which in the eyes of some may exclude her from true Greekness (cf. Lucian *DeorConc.* 4), the text emphasises her cultural orientation as a Greek. Any of Mark's readers who knew their own Greekness would stand even more firmly with this woman and her need — as would

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7 The vocabulary is different: κλάσματα (6:42); ψιχία (7:28).

plenty of Romans, since they were increasingly impressed with things Greek as time went on.

2.2 The Child and Death

Since the child is off-stage for the entire incident, it is difficult to say much about her problem, although, given the mother's evident concern and persistence, her situation seems serious. The *daimons* are known to be violent and bent on destruction; and the girl is already on her bed, suggesting a serious condition, perhaps even life-threatening.[8]

2.3 The Child and the Dead

Once again, readers would consider the *daimon* as a ghost of the dead. Has it been set upon her by some magical curse, whether as a result of a curse upon the family (see on Suppliant #7a), or, since she is a female and if she is approaching marriageable age, she could be a victim of the frequent erotic magic. In this case someone would be seeking to draw her to himself by torturing her with a *daimon*. These spells could pin her to her bed in great suffering, e.g. 'Lay Allous low with fever, with sickness unceasing, starvation, and madness' (PGM O2 =Gager**35** [2nd AD]). They were particularly vindictive and closely aligned with death. Counter-curses could be taken out to protect the women of the family from these kind of spells (e.g. Gager**125**). Whatever the cause, she is under the power of the dead and her mother is concerned for her. But Jesus casts out the spirit, even at a distance.

2.4 Jesus and the Emperor

Jesus' assistance even for a Greek may be another small item setting Jesus in parallel with the emperors. It was said of Augustus that he was the Caesar 'who healed the pestilences common to Greeks and barbarians' (Philo *Legat.* 145). Since Philo was a Jew, who would be classed as a Barbarian by the Greco-Romans (cf. Plut. *Quaest.conv.* 4.5, 670F), he apparently cites a piece of standard Augustan rhetoric in an endeavour to move Caligula to emulate his noble predecessor.[9] Augustus' 'healing'

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8 See the comments on being bed-ridden above, on Suppliant #2.

9 I have not been able to find the thought elsewhere, however.

was purely metaphorical, but Mark's account is of something actually happening to a person. If this rhetoric was well known, perhaps the readers would recognise Jesus, in Augustan fashion, moving from the barbarians to the Greeks. Jesus could break the bondage to the dead even amongst the Greeks.

10. Suppliant #10: A Deaf Man With Difficult Speech (7:31–37)

1. Text to Reader: A Deaf Man Healed

Consistent with what is by now the normal pattern, the disciples are absent from the scene and the readers are aligned with the suppliant. Returning to the Decapolis (v.31) recalls the encounter with Legion, who had launched a mission to this region (5:20). An undefined group (cf. 2:3; 8:22) bring a κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον for Jesus to lay hands upon (v.32). The elaborate description of the man's condition, as well as the similarity of the introduction of this scene to others involving suppliants,[1] helps align the readers with this sufferer. The readers are privileged observers of the private interaction between the man and Jesus (v.33a). Jesus performed a series of actions (vv.33f.): he put his fingers into the man's ears, spat, touched the man's tongue, looked up to heaven, sighed, and said a word requiring translation.[2] The man's hearing was restored and 'the bond of his tongue was released and he spoke straight' (ἐλύθη ὁ δεσμὸς τῆς γλώσσης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλάλει ὀρθῶς, v.35).

Jesus commanded the wider group (αὐτοῖς, v.32) not to tell anyone, but the narrator stresses that their opposite response was in proportion to his commands: 'as much as he commanded, the more they were more excessively proclaiming' (v.36). Rather than being a disobedience preventing readers from identifying with the suppliant,[3] this is a delightful example of Mark's irony and tongue-in-cheek humour. Jesus' dealings with suppliants have often issued in speech rather than silence (1:44–45; 5:19–20; 7:36; 10:48), which 'creates the expectation that minor characters will speak freely when they are confronted by the miraculous power of Jesus.'[4] This textual

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1 Cf. Williams, 121f.

2 Translation adds an exotic flavour, see Fowler, 108.

3 Williams, 122, 123, 126.

4 Williams, 54. He fails to draw the implications of this statement for his view of suppliant disobedience.

norm — especially when the previous occasions have also been expunged of any suggestion of 'disobedience' — makes it difficult to evaluate the speech negatively on this occasion. In addition to these textual norms, the scene ends with a description of the crowd's emotion which creates sympathy. So too does their positive evaluation of Jesus, for it is offered as an explanation of their persistent speech, and the explanation of a weakness promotes sympathy, not judgement. Having been aligned with the stammering man, it seems so appropriate that the story ends with much speech, that, far from sitting in judgement on these intractable talkers, the readers are entirely sympathetic to them. In tune with Mark's famous irony, this is a touch of subtle humour: the more that Jesus sought to silence them, the more they spoke! The narrator indicates that the movement had acquired such momentum that even Jesus could not stop it.

The final statement gives the readers insight into the people's overwhelming amazement at what had occurred and provides direct speech so the readers can hear for themselves (v.37). Their positive evaluation generalises beyond this one incident (καλῶς πάντα πεποίηκεν) enabling the readers to recall all the marvellous events so far and presenting the healing of this man as something of a climax to the series, for Jesus 'even makes the deaf to hear and the speechless to speak'. In this way it acts as an explicit commentary on this incident and on Jesus' ministry in general. The clear allusion to Isa 35:5–6 also supplies implicit commentary from the Old Testament for those with eyes to see. As another stroke of irony, these people from the Greco-Roman Decapolis (whether knowingly or unknowingly) proclaim that Isaiah's promises to Israel are being fulfilled in their midst. The crumbs falling beyond the borders of Israel are being snatched up with great excitement.

The symbolic dimension of this miracle is regularly noticed. Defective hearing is an established Markan metaphor for the inability to understand (4:12 = Isa 6:9; cf. 7:14, 18). Jesus called upon people to hear (4:3, 9, 23, 24; cf. 7:14, [16]), using a parable stressing the various types of hearers (4:15, 16, 18) and recommending that the word of the kingdom be received (4:20). This was a call for Israel to join the remnant, in

order to be a part of the coming harvest. The opponents, and even the disciples (7:17f., cf. οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ...; cf. 6:52), have not performed well in terms of hearing and understanding, and even a Greek woman had been more attentive (7:25, 28). Since this man had an inability to hear and yet he was healed by Jesus, the readers are given hope that the 'metaphorically deaf' will be healed by him too.[5]

But this metaphorical dimension must also be understood within the wider framework of the expectations of the kingdom. Entry to the kingdom comes through understanding Jesus and this comes through hearing well (4:20). This scene suggests that as Jesus is the one who opens the ears of the deaf, so he will also be the one to equip them to enter the resurrection harvest.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 The Deaf-Mute and Death

Although being deaf-mute did not, in itself, place a person at risk of death, like blindness (see on Suppliant #11), it was nevertheless quasi-death. The senses of hearing and seeing were often coupled together, for they represented the means by which sense information was gained. Like sight, hearing was connected with understanding, and deafness with its lack.[6] Conversely, once the mind and wits are bound, a person will cease speaking (Gager**115**; Philo *Det.* 168). Because the soul is nourished through the intellect, i.e. through this epistemological process, then to be a deaf-mute is to have a poverty-stricken soul. Just like the blind were already living in the darkness of the underworld, as we shall see, so, too, the deaf were living in a realm as silent as the grave. When Oedipus plucked out his eyes after discovering what he had done, he wished he could do more:

> Had I known a way to choke the springs
> Of hearing, I had never shrunk to make

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5 Williams, 123.

6 Qumran and the rabbis connected the deaf-mute with the imbecile; 4QD^{b}; Rabinowitz.

> A dungeon of this miserable frame,
> Cut off from sight and hearing; for 'tis bliss
> To bide in regions sorrow cannot reach.
>
> (Soph. *OT* 1386–1390)

Being deaf and mute made a person like a corpse; cf. the term of abuse 'You deaf and dumb corpse!' (Apul. *Met.* 8.25). Several curses draw a comparison between the desired silence/deafness and the corpse with which the tablet was deposited, as in the separation charm:

> As the dead man who is buried here can neither talk nor speak, so let Rhodine who belongs to Marcus Licinius Faustus be dead and unable to talk or speak. As the dead is welcome neither to gods nor men, so shall Rhodine who belongs to Marcus Licinius be as welcome and just as precious as this dead person who is buried here. Dis Pater, I commend to you Rhodine, that she may be ever hated by Marcus Licinius Faustus.
>
> (CIL I.2.1012= Grant, 240f. [1st AD])

Sometimes the wish seems to be that the victim actually becomes deaf/dumb like the corpse — as a preliminary to being dead themselves: 'let her no longer rise up, walk around, talk (μὴ λαλῆσαι), move about, but let her remain a corpse, pale, weak, paralysed, chilled' (AthAg**App**). The illnesses in the 1st century BC Roman counter-curse, are to fill the time before the victim's eventual death with horrors: 'I give thee his ears, nose, nostrils, tongue, lips, and teeth, so he may not speak his pain ...' (Fox=Gager**134**). A burial inscription from Nth Africa (AD 212+) which bears testimony to the tragedy of being on the receiving end of such a curse, shows that muteness could be attributed to a *defixio* and a step towards death. A Roman tribune laments over his wife, in her late twenties, who had 'long [lain] mute' before she died. 'She did not receive the kind of death she deserved — cursed by spells (*carminibus defixa*)' (CIL 8.2756; Gager **136**).

Although not absolutely clear, an undated inscription to Good Fortune from Apollonia ad Rhyndacum in Mysia may illustrate that deafness was regarded as a living death. It tells of the dedication of the 'ears' of an altar in thanks for the recovery of hearing:

ταῖς ἀκοαῖς τῆς | θεοῦ | Ἑ[ρ]μιανὸς ΟΚΙ-- | ζήσας ἀπέδωκεν | εὐχαριστήριον | τὰ ὦτα καὶ τὸν βω|μόν

For the hearing of the goddess, Hermianos | having lived ... rendered the ears and altar as a thank-offering

(*NewDocs 3*, 22)

Although ζήσας may simply introduce an age note, if it can be translated in a causal sense (cf. Ψ 118:37; 1Thess 3:8, νῦν ζῶμεν), then the cured man would be referring to his healing as 'having come alive'. If deafness was like being dead, hearing again would be life from the dead.

2.2 The Deaf-mute and the Dead

It has long been recognised that, of all the healing stories, this one has the clearest links with magic, even if commentators have been reluctant to acknowledge its presence fully.[7] Jesus performs privately, puts his fingers in the ears, spits, touches his tongue, looks to heaven, sighs, utters a word of command, and the man is healed instantly.[8] These actions are not merely symbols of Jesus' mercy and power,[9] or part of a medical healing ritual,[10] but they suggest a magical framework. If the Greco-Roman readers recognised the healing's connections with magic, this would increase the probability that they would suspect that the illness was also magically caused.

Attacks on the ears and the tongue were a particularly frequent kind of magical assault. A curse on the tongue was the bane of the legal advocate and orator, who would suspect a curse if performing badly. So when Aristophanes alludes to the sudden paralysis of the orator Thucydides during a trial, the scholiast, preserving some

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7 Deissmann (1927), 304ff., cf. Deissmann (1908), 84ff., discussed Mk 7:32–37 in the light of the binding conception in ancient magic. This was one of the oldest discussions of the impact of magic on the New Testament. Until the twenties, however, magic received only the barest of mentions in the commentaries; Hull, 75 n.13. Although Hull says that it is 'mentioned often' in those thereafter, his comments indicate that it is 'often mentioned' only to be rejected (cf. n.14) and, since his time, magic is still regularly overlooked.

8 Hull, 73; Bonner (1927).

9 This was the normal nineteenth view, revived by Hunter. For a critique, see Hull, 73f.

10 For a critique, see Hull, 74f.

4th century BC Attic source, suggests his tongue had been magically bound[11] (*Vesp.* 946–948; see also Cicero, *Brut.* 217;*Orat.* 128–129; Libanius,[12] *Orat.* 1.245–249).

Curse tablets were clearly one way such attacks upon the talking class were implemented. Amongst their numerous attacks on various body parts, often named with a precision similar to that of Mk 7:32ff., the organs of hearing and speech are well represented. The ears are cursed in the tablet from Julius Caesar's time (Fox=Gager**134**); another curses the hearing organs (ἀκοαί DT**41**a=Gager 85 [1st/2nd AD]; cf. Mk 7:35). Several curses aim at making a person deaf (κωφός), usually in combination with the loss of speech. For example, the AthAg tablets (3rd AD) 'chill' their victims so that they become 'deaf, dumb, without mind, without heart' (κωφός, ἄλαλος, ἄνους, ἀκέραιος; SGD**23**; AthAg**2, 4, 8, 9, 10**), or, 'hearing nothing' (μηδὲν ἀκούων, AthAg**3, 6, 8, 9**; cf. SGD**164** = Gager**77**[13]).

As for speech, the 'silencing charm' must be one of the oldest and most frequent magical curses. The context for these silencing curses is readily understood. The wish that the words of an enemy may be disregarded or silenced is natural, especially if there is some kind of legal battle going on, although it would not have always been the innocent party engaged in the use of a *defixio*,[14] such as that requesting the underworld powers, 'bind them with the fetters … so that they will be speechless; pervert their speech; in their place hobble and tie them' (McCulloughE). The binding of the tongue was in order to stop the words of opponents (DTA**75**=Gager **65**, [4th BC]) by making them ἄφωνοι (e.g. DT**66**; 4th BC). An ancient curse (older than 5th BC) seeks 'a twisted tongue for incapacity' (γλῶσα ἀπεστραμέν' ἐπ' ἀτ<ε>λείαι, SGD**99**), and another curses the tongues and souls of more than twenty men and women (SGD**1**; cf. SGD**75** [n.d.]). Such curses can be found from the 3rd century BC (SGD**150**),

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11 Faraone (1991), 15, and Faraone (1989).

12 Cf. Bonner (1932) and, more generally, for the continuation of such charges in late antiquity Brown.

13 Youtie and Bonner, 54, ll. 4–6.

14 Cf. MES, 155.

through to the 3rd or 4th century AD (SGD**169**).[15] Silencing is a prominent part of the Cyprus tablets (DT**22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35**; [3rd AD]) which use numerous expressions amounting to the same thing in their quest to muzzle their victim (cf. DT**15**=Gager**4**).[16] One of the Semitic bowl texts even enlists the same Isaiah 6 language utilised by Mark to this end ('in the same way as you have eyes but do not see, as you have ears but do not hear …', N-S **Bowl 6**).

Several charms draw the comparison with the silence of the corpse (e.g. DT**69** Ib [4th BC]; **25**) and some also introduce the notion of 'chilling' (DTA**60** 'chilled and voiceless'), or aim at a corpse's incapacity (DT**68, 69** [4th BC]). Not only were the curses aiming to make the victim (like) a corpse, but they also utilised corpse-spirits to bring this about. Ovid explains that at Feralia, the festival of the dead (Feb 17–21), young women would come to an old woman for the preparation and consecration of lead *defixiones* (evidently silencing charms, cf. PGM IX.1–14) in connection with the underworld goddess Muta (Ovid *Fastii* 2.571–82 = Gager**144**).[17] Since it seems that these curse tablets were deposited in the cemeteries, it is highly likely that the agency by which Muta worked would involve the dead. Some of the curses make this explicit, by calling upon ghosts to bring about their malicious wishes to deafen and/or silence the victim (e.g. the Cyprus tablets used unknown *nekydaimons*; N-S **Bowl 9** was issued 'in the name of Mot and … the spirit which resides in the cemetery'). There were specialist 'deaf-*daimons*' (Thompson"**X**"; Cyprus tablets DT**22–36**[18]) — presumably the *daimons* who cause deafness, rather than being deaf themselves — and mute-

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15 The many curses aiming at muteness can strike at tongues, γλῶσσαι (DT **15**; **16** I; **47**; **49**; **50**; **52**; **66**; **69** Ib; **81** a; **87**; PGM **O5**); or the mouth, στόμα (DT**16** I; **15**; **49**; **74**), [στόμ]ιον (DT**75** a; **249**); or the voice, ἡ φωνή (DT**15**; **16** I; **22**; **24**; **25**; **26**; **29**; **30**; **31**; **32**; **33**; **35**), or even the saliva, [σί]αλον (DT **75** b 3; cf. N-S **Bowl 9**). See also PGM VII.396–404; IX.1–14; XLVI.4–8.

16 Cf. Jordan (1994b).

17 Ovid was suspected of inventing this goddess until her existence was confirmed by the discovery of a *defixio* — Egger — which reads: 'O Muta Tacita, let Quartus be silent, let him run around disturbed like a scurrying mouse'.

18 Cf. Jordan (1994b).

daimons, against which the fearful needed protection (TSol 9, 12; P.Yale 989.1–7 [3rd/4th AD]).[19]

2.3 The Deaf-Mute and Jesus

The readers may suspect that the deaf-mute was a victim of magical, and so ghostly, attack. He was certainly one of the living dead, who sat perpetually in the silence of the grave and whose stammering speech was only marginally better than a corpse's absolute silence. The suspicion would be that he had been reduced to this state by the dead working against the living.

Nevertheless, Jesus manages to overcome his enormous problem, bringing him back into the land of the living, opening up the opportunity for much further commerce with the living.[20] The crowds from the Gentile Decapolis, with all their sophistication and commitment to Greco-Roman culture, immediately recognised that something remarkable had occurred in front of their eyes, and their chatter about this man could not be stopped. In words echoing Israel's prophetic promises, they marvel that Jesus 'has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak' (Isa 35:5f.)

11. The Journey's End (8:1–10)

The second sea journey ends with another feeding miracle (8:1–10), which is so similar to the first that the readers are utterly amazed at the dullness of the disciples, who appear to have forgotten the former feeding so quickly.

12. Journey #3: How Can Blind Eyes See?

The third sea journey begins with Jesus refusing the Pharisees' demand for a sign (8:11–13). In the boat, through a discussion about bread, Jesus forces the disciples to reflect upon both feeding miracles. Since his language is reminiscent of the parables

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19 See Daniel (1977), improving on the text offered by O'Callaghan and Proux.

20 Gundry, 492, comments that healing a deaf-mute would be as great a miracle as raising the dead.

discourse, the scene causes the readers to review the entire intervening narrative section (4:35 onwards). His warning against the Pharisees and Herod sums up the two poles of Israel's leadership which have received critique (Herod: 6:14–29; Pharisees: 7:1–23). Since Jesus has appeared as the true shepherd of Israel, feeding the leaderless flock of God, this warning forcefully reminds the readers that Mark is presenting Jesus as an alternative leader. Whereas Israel's politico-religious leadership has been exposed as destructive, Jesus has helped those in need. He has not consumed the flock, but he has fed it instead.

The first sea journey raised questions about Jesus, faith and mortality. Jesus has been presented as a leader who can deal with death and the shadow it cast across human lives. The forced reflection during the final sea journey reveals that the disciples have a long way to go. Jesus' questions cause the readers to ask whether they yet have faith, or whether their hearts are still hard like the leadership of Israel. Jesus' leadership promises to bring life to the dead, but do they see? do they hear? do they understand?

13. Suppliant #11: A Blind Man Sees (8:22–26)

Since the last of the three sea crossings concludes in this scene (v.22), this is an indicator that the healing of the blind man acts as the climax to this journey and to Mark's second main section.

1. Text to Reader: A Blind Man Sees

Apart from their presence in the initial plural verb (v.22; cf. 1:21; 5:1; 6:1), the disciples play no part in this scene. The reader is aligned with the suppliant, who is brought by an undefined group and is characterised as τυφλός (v.22). Since his problem is (non-)visual, this description already has focalising power.

After Jesus leads him out of the village, they are the only two participants in the scene, but the readers are also privileged to take the journey with them and to observe the interaction. They watch Jesus as he performs a series of actions, reminiscent of those performed on the deaf-mute. Spitting into his eyes and laying hands upon him, Jesus asked whether he could see anything (v.23). The direct speech enables the readers to hear the question as if they were the blind man. An inside view of his visual perception (ἀναβλέψας, v.24),[1] ensures that they are aligned with him as he reports his partial sight, as do the inside views reported from his own mouth (βλέπω, ὁρῶ, v.24), and the strangeness of the imagery, since it requires active thought to imagine what he sees. Jesus placed his hands upon his eyes again. Three verbs, an adverb and a universal pronoun (διέβλεψεν καὶ ἀπεκατέστη καὶ ἐνέβλεπεν τηλαυγῶς ἅπαντα) stress his success (v.25). These inside views continue to focalise the readers through the man, so that, after being aligned with his partial sight, they now experience its full clarity. The concluding instruction to avoid the village (v.26) confirms the readers' sense of privilege, for, if this command is heeded, the healing they have seen will not become common knowledge.

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1 Fowler, 121.

This healing of the blind man and the one to follow (10:46–52) both have a narrative significance which plays upon sight as a metaphor for understanding. The image first appeared at the climax of the first main section when the parables discourse called upon people to listen (4:3, 9). Drawing a parallel between Isaiah's role and his own, Jesus' parables were so that Israel may 'be ever seeing but never perceiving; and ever hearing but never understanding' (4:12; cf. Isa 6:9f. LXX). The importance of hearing the word (15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 33) was stressed by linking the two senses (v.24). Hearing is the way to 'sight' and this process is the means by which a person enters the coming harvest, i.e. the kingdom of God. Hearing with amazement is not enough (6:2), nor simply hearing the word (6:11, 14, 16, 20), but it must be heard and accepted (4:20) in order to truly 'see'. Positively, the images are associated with the theme of belief; negatively, the failure to hear and see, and so to understand, is linked with hardness of heart.

The disciples' 'sight' had not proved any better than that of the rest of Israel. Their slowness to believe had reached its climax in the final boat scene, where Jesus asked them: οὔπω νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε; πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν; (8:17; cf. 4:40), before questioning whether they were part of the Israel denounced by the prophets: ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε καὶ ὦτα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε; (8:18; cf. Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2). Metaphorically speaking, they remain both blind and deaf. Thus the first blind man is healed as the climax to a long section in which hearing and seeing has been repeatedly on the agenda as a metaphor for believing and gaining insight into Jesus' person. The miracle therefore operates as a concrete illustration of Jesus' ability to open the eyes of the blind. If he can do so for the physically blind, then the hope is erected that he may do so for the metaphorically blind. Granted, his ministry was to have a blinding effect (4:10–11), but he had also given a promise of disclosure (4:22) for those who listen with acceptance. The disciples may be blind, but since Jesus promised to make them into fishers of men (1:17), their blindness is an object which he must overcome. The fact that he cured this blind man holds promise that he will cure these other blind men as well. When Jesus sends the man home without entering the village, it is not to contrast the blind

man's obedience in remaining silent, with the deaf man's disobedience,[2] for no response is reported either way. Instead, this command effectively removes the man from the narrative, and, after the pattern has so often been to provide a response, the lack in this case is intriguing, yielding a sense that the story is somehow incomplete. This open-endedness prepares for the next section in which the disciples' eyes begin to be opened.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Blindness and Death

2.1.1 Blindness

Eye-conditions were fairly common in the ancient world, to judge from the listings of eye-salves in the literature (Celsus Med. 6.2–3, 30ff.; and Scribonius Largus, *Comp.Medic.* 18–37 [both 1st AD]) and magical material;[3] from other cures, such as saliva (Pliny *HN* 28:7; Tac. *Hist.* 4:81); from various archaeological findings (ocular cachets; engraved stamps for impressing eye ointments with the manufacturer's name;[4] 'surgical' implements); and from magical spells dealing with eye-conditions.[5] Presumably the frequency of eye disease also increased the incidence of blindness.

Blindness was such an impediment to life that the blind, often coupled with the lame, were proverbial for ineffectual weakness and dependency (cf. 2Sam 5:6, 8; Jer. 31:8). They could go nowhere without a guide (Soph. *Ant.* 989; *OC* 1; Apul. *Met.* 8.12) and needed the protection of others (Job 29:15; Soph. *OC* 21).

2.1.2 Metaphorical Blindness

For moderns and for ancients (cf. Arr. *Epict.Diss.* 1.20.12), Mark's metaphorical use of blindness would be fairly obvious. This motif finds an ancient parallel, for example, in the *Oedipus*.[6] Initially Oedipus accused (blind) Teiresias of being blind in 'the

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2 *Pace* Williams, 130.

3 ACBM, 315; ACBM.25, cf. SMA Pl. 5, pp. 112–113, pp. 70–71.

4 Singer and Wasserstein (1970b), 661; *NewDocs3*, 56f.

5 For example, Babylonian: Farber**2.2**, **4.2**?, **4.3**; Greek (PGM VII.197–98, ?XCIV.4–6; XCIV.22–26; XCVII.1–6; P.Bon 9 [4th/5th AD]; SuppMag**26** [5th AD]; **32** [5/6th AD]; and Coptic (cf. PDM xiv.1097–1103, 1104–9; ?1110–29).

6 Smith (1995), 211 n.10.

ears, the mind and the eyes' (τά τ' ὦτα τόν τε νοῦν τά τ' ὄμματα, Soph. *OT* 371, cf. 389), whereas Teiresias and the audience know that Oedipus may have the eyes, but he fails to see what he has done (412).

2.1.3 Blindness and Death

Less obvious to the modern, however, is the understanding of blindness as a death-like state. Instead of seeing the light, a blind person dwelt in perpetual darkness. So Polymestor cried out to the sun:

> O couldst thou but heal these eye-pits gory,
> O couldst thou but heal the blind, and restore me,
> O Sun, thy light.
>
> (Eur. *Hec.* 1066–67)

and Oedipus gibed Teiresias:

> Offspring of endless Night, thou hast no power
> O'er me or any man who sees the light.
>
> (Soph. *OT* 374f.)

This meant that they lived in a kind of Hades, since those who are alive 'see the light' (e.g. *Il.* 18.61; *Od.* 4.540; Hes. *Op.* 155, *Theog.* 669; *Hymn to Demeter* 35), whereas the dead are 'those who once looked upon the light' but who now live in the gloom of the underworld (e.g. PGM XXXVI.138; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 630; PsPhoc. 100f.). The loss of sight therefore brings a person to the underworld; even while alive, death invades their body.[7] Charite rejoiced in giving her husband's killer a ghost-like, netherworldly existence by gouging out his eyes:

> You will live, but your eyes will die; You will not see the light and you will need some companion's hand; You will not possess Charite and you will enjoy no marriage; You will neither be refreshed by the sleep of death, nor delighted by the pleasures of life, but you will wander as an uneasy phantom between Orcus and the Sun.
>
> (Apul. *Met.* 8.12)

This cluster of ideas appears in the book of Tobit, in which the overcoming of blindness is central to the plot. Tobit regards his blindness (2:9 ff.) as a living death:

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7 It was a fate worse than death, according to the chorus to Oedipus 'thou wert better dead than living blind' (Soph. *OT* 1367).

> What joy can I have any more? I, a man without power of eyesight! I cannot see the light of heaven, but I lie in darkness like the dead who do not see the light any more. Living, I am among the dead! I hear the voice of men, yet I cannot see them (5:10).[8]

As the book proceeds, Tobit's rescue from blindness is portrayed as a rescue from death.[9]

On some epistemological views, blindness contains a further impediment for literal sight is necessary to gain understanding. So, for example, on Plato's schema in the *Timaeus* the blind man would not have the ability to see the heavens and be led to contemplate philosophy (Pl. *Ti.* 47A–B).[10] This would mean that his soul could never be expected to rise to the pure regions above. The underworld which has invaded his body now, would also be his home in the afterlife.

2.2 Blindness and the Dead

Although by no means common, curses attacking body parts could also attack the eyes. A fragmentary text curses the (finger?)nails, eyes (?), the spine, and the feet (SGD **80** [n.d.]); and a judicial curse (300 BC) wishes the victim's body parts, including the ὀφθαλμοί (DT**49**= Gager**44**), to be bound, hidden, buried, and nailed down, perhaps indicating that it is seeking the victims' death. The malicious counter-curse from Julius Caesar's day, to which we have already referred several times (Fox = Gager **134**), certainly wishes to kill the person. As a prelude, it hands over the 'brow and eyebrows, eyelids and pupils' as a step towards this end. It even uses blindness to depict this death: 'Mayest thou so irrevocably damn him that his eyes may never see the light of another month', illustrating how close the one was to the other.

As with the other conditions, the dead are also specifically called upon to inflict blindness, as in the series of Carthagian curses against charioteers and their horses (3rd AD) naming the eyes (τὰ ὄμματα DT**241** = Gager**12**; **242** = Gager**10** 'pluck out their eyes so that they cannot see'), or the act of sight (ἡ ὄρασις **234**; **235**; **237**=Gager**9**;

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8 For the last statement, cf. the saying of Heraclitus ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ τῶν ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες (Diels-Kranz 22B 101a 1, 173, 15f.).

9 Further, see Bolt (1994).

10 The schema in the *Phaedo* provides him more opportunity, for the soul's contemplation without the senses of sight and hearing is deemed to be far better than with their utilisation (cf. 65B–C, 66A, 78E–80A).

238; 239; 240; 242) which all make use of unknown *nekydaimons* from graves. Presumably a similar vindictive purpose with a similar desired outcome would accompany the use of a waxen doll which has both eyes pricked out (PGM CXXIV.1–43; cf. IV.296–466 = Gager**27**). This is used at a tomb and the powers below are invoked. Sepher ha-Rezim (2.181f.) has a spell 'to bind or rebuke the spirit causing blindness' and a bowl text has a curse based upon Dt 28 which inflicts blindness 'in the name of Mot and ... the spirit which resides in the cemetery' (N-S **Bowl 9**).

This handful of curses and charms shows that blindness could be magically inflicted; it could be associated with death; and it could be caused by the agency of a ghost. Not only did the blind person sit in the darkness of death, but that darkness could be caused by the dead.

2.3 Blindness and the Healing Gods

2.3.1 The Gods

The blind were healed by Isis[11] and the inscriptions at Epidauros indicate that the healing god, Asklepios, apparently dealt frequently with eye complaints. They report several miraculous cures of quite remarkable cases of blindness. In one, the woman concerned had mocked the possibility that the lame and the blind could be healed (Cartlidge, 152), which underlines the general perception that to be blind was to be beyond help. Another miraculous cure from Epidauros provides a remarkable parallel to Mk 8:22–26: 'Alcetas of Halice being blind saw a vision in which the god, he thought, came to him and with his fingers went over his eyes, and the first things which he saw were the trees in the temple precincts' (*IG* IV.951.120–1; Whittaker, 212).

2.3.2 The New Gods

When Vespasian was in Alexandria, along with the man with a withered hand (see on 3:1–6), a blind man came to him for cure. Vespasian's doctors told him it was curable, but, even if it was not, the lack of cure would look bad for the beseecher, not for the future emperor. Vespasian's reputation was enhanced when he moistened the man's eyes

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11 Kee, 67. Cf. Diod. 1.25.5.

with spittle and cured him (Suet. 5.6; Tac. *Hist* 4.81). He had managed two miracles considered impossible: he had healed the lame (i.e. the withered hand) and the blind.

This incident, which occurred (AD 69) within a decade or two of when Mark was read, illustrates the increasingly god-like role that (future) emperors were adopting. The imperial propaganda proclaimed the emperor son of god, the source of life for the world. This incident suggests that even the older gods, such as Serapis-Asklepios, were conceding things properly under their own jurisdiction to the new gods who walk upon the earth, the masters of land and sea.

2.4 Sight to the Blind

Mark's son of God also opened blind eyes, but he showed no reluctance, nor did he consult the physicians first, or calculate the cost of a failed miracle to his reputation. In fact, Jesus avoided publicity while nevertheless acting on behalf of one in terrible need. This man who already dwelt in the darkness of the underworld was led by the hand to Jesus, and, as a result, could see absolutely clearly. Jesus had brought him from the darkness of death, into the light of life.

Chapter 5: Entering the Coming Kingdom (8:27–10:52)

Each of the three sub-sections in Mark's central section begins with a prediction of Jesus' death and the resurrection to follow.

1. Prediction #1: The Son of Man Must Die (8:27–9:29)

The first sub-section opens by re-issuing the Christological question (cf. 1:27; 4:41; 6:2), as Jesus asks what people were saying about him (8:27–30). After reporting the opinions of others (cf. 6:14–16), Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ. This finally aligns them with the opinion the narrator shared with the readers at the beginning (1:1), although the following events will show that further progress is required.

Jesus then announces that the Son of Man must die and after three days will rise again (v.31). The necessity (cf. δεῖ) no doubt arises from his divine commissioning as the servant (1:11) and his commitment to continue in the will of God (3:31–35). He announces that his death will come from Israel's leadership which is no surprise to the readers (3:6), but Peter takes exception (v.32). Peter's rebuke has often been explained in terms of a supposed Christological misunderstanding, i.e. that he could not cope with a Christ who suffered. In view of the fact that it follows Jesus' openly proclaimed statement, and that Jesus then talks about being unashamed of him, it seems more likely that he disagreed with Jesus' public slander of Israel's leadership. Whether he thought Jesus to be misguided, or politically naive, or unwise, his rebuke was, in effect, being ashamed of Jesus.

Jesus called the crowd and his disciples and talked about what following him would entail. The repetition of the idea of following him at He beginning (εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, cf. 1:20) and end (ἀκολουθείτω μοι) of his initial statement (v.34) recalls the disciples' call, which is now generalised. The middle statements indicate what the following will entail. Mark's early readers would not immediately

resort to a metaphorical understanding of the denial of self and taking up of one's cross, for these were very real possibilities in a world ruled by Roman muscle. Jesus had announced the coming of an alternative kingdom to Rome (1:15), an act which would have placed himself and his followers under threat. He now announced that he would be killed by the authorities. If anyone wanted to follow him, they could do so, but, given the nature of his cause, they had better reckon with their own death. Presumably this is what Peter had failed to do.

Jesus reinforced his call with a discussion about where true value was to be found. The previous section of the Gospel (4:35–8:26) has already demonstrated salvation to be from death, whether literal, or in the several forms with which its shadow fell across human life. When Jesus speaks of his own necessary and impending death at the hands of the authorities, the act of following him also gains a life and death focus, which he urges upon his hearers through a paradoxical use of σώζω. If a person wished to save their life (i.e. by not following Jesus), this will mean losing it; but if a person is prepared to lose their life for his sake and the gospel's, this will result in saving it (8:35). Given that he has just announced that his own future will mean death at the hands of Israel's leadership (v.31), and that his potential followers should consider the possibility that they too will be crucified (v.34), then the choice to save life, or to lose it, is clearly a real choice between life and death. Jesus' paradox reverses the normal and logical human viewpoint — which Peter had adopted (cf. 8:33) — in favour of the opinion that life is found by following him to death on a cross. When he talks of being saved, therefore, it is salvation from death. Since his first 'passion prediction' also spoke of resurrection on the third day (v.31, cf. Hos 6:2), being saved is linked to the long-awaited resurrection from the dead. Jesus is calling people to follow him onwards to death, in the hope of being saved by resurrection.

This call to the crowds acquires urgency by the imminent prospect of the coming of the Son of Man (8:38) and of the kingdom in power (9:1). Both events are integrally related, since, according to Daniel, the Son of Man comes to the throne of God (Dan 7:13) and receives all authority in God's kingdom (7:14), which is then shared with the

saints (7:22). When this cluster of events occurs, the Son of Man will be ashamed of those who have been ashamed of him before the sinful and adulterous power structures of 'this generation' (Mk 8:38, cf. 8:12). Since these events will occur before some of the people in the crowd die (9:1), it is time for urgent and wholehearted commitment to him and his cause ('the gospel', v.35; 'my words', v.38), rather than shame. It is time to face up to death in the hope of resurrection.

2. Suffering Before the Kingdom (9:2–13)

1. Text to Reader: Suffering Before the Kingdom

Six days later, Jesus took three of his disciples up a high mountain where he was transfigured (vv.2f.) and spoke with Elijah and Moses (v.3). The disciples were terrified (v.4), a cloud descended, and a voice virtually repeated the words the readers heard at Jesus' baptism, identifying Jesus as God's son, the Beloved (v.7; cf. 1:11) and told them to listen to him. Finally, they looked around to find only Jesus (v.8). After this experience, their journey down the mountain was alive with conversation. Jesus told them to keep it all secret until after the Son of Man rose from the dead. The disciples eagerly seized[1] on this statement, debating it amongst themselves, discussing 'what rising from the dead will mean', i.e. what will it be like to be a part of the (general) resurrection.

They asked Jesus why the scribes said Elijah must come first, i.e. first before the kingdom (9:1)/ resurrection (9:10). Jesus agreed with the scribal exegesis (cf. Mal 3:23 LXX), but posed his own question about the need for the Son of Man to suffer. This erects a series of expectations: before the resurrection and the coming of the kingdom, the scribes (and Jesus) say that Elijah must come first, but Jesus adds that the Son of Man must suffer many things. When Jesus informed them that Elijah had come — the

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1 Interpretations (Swete, 192; Taylor, 394) and translations (RV, RSV, NIV, NRSV) which suggest they 'kept the matter in mind' miss the force of κρατέω, wrongly construe πρὸς ἑαυτούς with the preceding verb rather than the following participle (with Victor; Syr^{sin}) — for which there is no analogous usage, Swete, 192 —, and create a contradiction between the two halves of the verse.

readers would know that he meant John (cf. 1:2–8) — this meant that only one of these expectations is left unfulfilled. Before the resurrection and the kingdom arrives, the Son of Man must suffer first. In this way, the scene coming down the mountain reinforces Jesus' first passion-resurrection prediction. He must die, not only because it is according to the divine plan, but because it is the necessary precursor to the coming of the resurrection and the kingdom of God.

2. Reader to Text: A Potential Apotheosis

2.1 Features of Translations

The transfiguration scene contains some parallels to stories[2] in which a person either disappeared and/ or was translated to heaven. In particular, it has several close parallels to Josephus' account of the disappearance of Moses.[3] A small number of stories involved a translation at the point of death, or the disappearance of a body after death, but the transfiguration parallels the larger group of disappearances in which people avoided death altogether.

Translations could take place upon mountains (v.2; Diod. 4.82.6 [Aristaeus]; Joseph. *AJ* 4.325 [Moses]), and often under changed weather conditions, be it an eclipse (Cic. *Rep.* 1.25, 2.17, Dio.Hal. 2.56.1–2 [Romulus]), or a storm (Soph. *OC* 1620 [Oedipus]; Livy 1.16, Plut. *Rom.* 27.6, Dio.Hal. 2.56.1–2 [Romulus]; Diod. 3.57.8 [Basileia];), or, as here, the descent of a cloud (v.7; Livy 1.16 [Romulus]; Joseph. *AJ* 4.326 [Moses]; Apollod. 2.7.7 [Herakles]). A translation may perhaps even involve white garments (v.3),[4] or a voice from heaven (v.7; Eur. *Bacc.* 1076–1079 [Dionysus]).

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2 Yarbro Collins (1992a), 142, claims that 'in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods these traditions of translation and deification were widespread,' although, in support, she cites only the retelling of the ancient flood story by the Babylonian historian Berossus, and Josephus. The increasing importance of the apotheosis of the emperor, with its backing in the Romulus story, offers further support.

3 See Tabor; Begg.

4 My basis for suggesting this is a detail in Lucian's mockery of the translation tradition in the *Passing of Peregrinus*. When Lucian embellished the story for 'the dullards agog to listen', he added an earthquake, a bellowing of the ground, a vulture flying out of the flames to heaven with a parting speech (39). The story backfires on him when someone else picks it up, adding

If this voice from heaven is read as an expression of divine pleasure in Jesus (v.7), it would be reminiscent of the belief that translations took place because of a person's virtue. This feature is highlighted in the LXX account of Enoch (Gen 5:22–24, εὐηρέστησεν τῷ θεῷ, twice, changing MT's וַיִּתְהַלֶּךְ) which is then transformed by Sirach (44.16) into a paradigm of repentance. Josephus explains (*AJ* 4.326) that Moses wrote that he died, 'for fear lest they should venture to say that by reason of his surpassing virtue he had gone back to the Deity'. The need for this 'correction' evidently arose because of the prevalence in the Greco-Roman world of the notion of such translations deriving from personal virtue. Cicero had reported that it was the virtue of Romulus which gave rise to the story of his translation (*Rep.* 1.25; 2.17) and the virtue of the emperors was also a presupposition of their apotheosis.[5] Plutarch considered the connection between virtue and apotheosis to be not only good sense, but, given his view of the soul, κατὰ φύσιν (Plut. *Rom.* 28.7–8).

Of course, a leading and necessary feature of such stories was the person's sudden disappearance (Soph. *OC* 1647f. [Oedipus]; Cic. *Rep.* 2.17, Plut. *Rom.* 27.6 [Romulus]; Diod. 2.14.3 [Semiramis]; Joseph. *AJ* 4.326 [Moses]; 2Kgs 2, *AJ* 9.27–28 [Elijah]),[6] sometimes reinforced by others searching for them. Mark's scene on the mountain concludes with language suggestive of such a search (v.8): looking around (περιβλεψάμενοι), they saw no-one. However, in a strange twist, Mark adds 'but only Jesus with them' — the person whom the readers would have expected to disappear is the only one still left behind; the heavenly visitors have left without him!

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the claim that he had seen Peregrinus 'in white raiment a little while ago, and had just now left him walking cheerfully in the Portico of the Seven Voices, wearing a garland of wild olive' (40). Since it is a detail added by one who evidently went along with the tradition, this suggests it was a part of that tradition, at least by the second century.

5 Pease, 17, suggests that it may have been Augustus' attitude to Hercules and Romulus (Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.11–16; *Epist.* 2.1.5–10; Suet. *Aug.* 95) which encouraged the notion of an immortality *ex virtute*. The lampooning of Claudius' apotheosis in Sen. *Apoc.* proves the point negatively.

6 There are many disappearance stories, which are not all translations to heaven; see Pease.

2.2 Romulus

When it comes to first-century apotheoses, Romulus, the founder of Rome 'merits especial attention'.[7] The deification of Romulus appeared as early as Ennius (*Ann.* 65–66, 111–113 [2nd BC]; cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.25, 2.17). Naturally enough, the events surrounding the moment when he had 'vanished from among men' (ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἠφανίσθη, Plut. *Cam.*32.5), so that 'Romulus was no more on earth' (Livy 1.15.6), were debated. Some suspected a senatorial conspiracy (Plut. *Num.* 2, 3), whereas others were convinced he had been 'caught up to the gods' (Plut. *Rom.* 27–28), one person even swearing an oath that he had seen him go (28.1).

2.3 The Emperors

As the imperial power took a new turn with Julius Caesar and then Augustus, the mythology surrounding this ancient figure from Rome's past began to be reapplied to her chief man. Although such vanishing figures lay in popular legends, or in literary imitations of popular legends, 'the principle was too suggestive to be overlooked in periods like [...] the early Roman Empire, when every occasion for glorifying and legitimising the ruling dynasty was eagerly sought.'[8]

Julius Caesar was the first human to be divinised since Romulus. Although obviously dying a purely human death (Suet. *Iul.* 83.2), his demise was nevertheless presented like that of Romulus (App. *B.Civ.* 2.114). The comet which appeared at his death provided the basis for the theory that his soul had become a new star (for his apotheosis, see Ov. *Met.* 15.745). 'Before the emperors could arrogate to themselves the complete trappings of divinity, the story of the ascension of Romulus, a lawgiver and sole ruler, could be made to serve as the model for Julius, the second founder of Rome — thus forming the mythical basis of the emperor's right to rule.'[9]

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7 Pease, 15.

8 Pease, 16.

9 Segal (1980), 1347, citing Ov. *Met.* 14.805–52, esp. 823–828. Cf. Wedderburn, 188.

The poets of the Augustan age utilised the Romulus myth to add weight to the imperial propaganda. 'Livy discusses Romulus's death and the rumours of it in terms reminiscent of the death of Julius Caesar',[10] commenting

> It is a great marvel what credence was generated by the man's tale, and how the loss of Romulus, for which the common people and the army grieved, was assuaged by the belief in his immortality.
>
> (Livy 1.16)

According to Segal, 'Livy's ironic attitude points out the value of the heavenly journey as a proof of immortality and as mythical underpinning of the Imperial system.'[11] Even from the beginning, such notions had their critics, as when Propertius contrasted the Roman love of war with his war with his mistress: 'One such night might make any man a god!' (2.15.40–43; cf. 2.5.1f.).

The Romulus myth was pressed into service for the divinisation of Augustus too. Dio Cassius (56.46 1–2), on Augustus, spoke of 'immortalising him' (ἀθανατίσαντες αὐτόν), and of Livia bestowing a million sesterces upon a certain Numerius Atticus, a senator and ex-praetor, because he swore that he had seen 'Augustus ascending to heaven after the manner of which tradition tells concerning Proculus and Romulus.' The pattern was also imitated when, in AD 38 Gaius' sister Panthea was deified and a senator, Livius Geminus, declared on oath he had seen her ascending to heaven and conversing with the gods (59.11.3).[12] Gaius did not succeed in deifying Tiberius, nor did his megalomaniac demands for divine honours in his lifetime succeed, but his endeavours certainly kept the issue of human beings becoming gods on the agenda.

After Augustus, Claudius was the next emperor granted an apotheosis. In AD 54, when he was poisoned by his wife Agrippina, 'to the amusement of Rome, Nero had Claudius deified.'[13] When Pliny the Younger reflected on the event he could say that 'Nero deified Claudius only to make him a laughing stock' (Pliny *Pan.* 11.1). Seneca,

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10 Segal (1980), 1347.

11 Segal (1980), 1348.

12 Jones, 1026.

13 Jones, 1028.

who was contemporary with the decision, wrote *Apocolocyntosis*, a biting satire of Claudius' deification in which the gods, climaxing with Augustus himself, express their disgust over Claudius being placed amongst them. Clearly, at the time when Mark was being read, apotheosis was an issue still under debate.

2.4 A Rejected Apotheosis

When Mark's transfiguration is read in the light of the translation stories, it appears that Jesus is presented with an opportunity for apotheosis which he rejected. A person who was translated avoided death altogether, as can be seen in the contrast between the translation of Oedipus and the normal manner of dying:

> For without wailing or disease or pain
> He passed away — an end most marvellous
>
> (Soph. *OC* 1663–1665)

Although the voice from heaven, now for the second time, declared Jesus to be the Son of God, he did not 'disappear from amongst men'. Instead of taking the chance to avoid the death he had predicted (8:31), he came back down the mountain resolved to die, explaining that, before the resurrection can arrive, the Son of Man must suffer (9:9–13). He rejected the opportunity to avoid death through apotheosis and embraced his future suffering for the sake of the divine plan. Thus, in the transfiguration, Jesus continued in his resolve to walk the path of the Suffering Servant (1:11; 3:31–35; 8:31; 9:11–13).[14]

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14 Cf. Caird, 293.

3. Suppliant #12: A Man and Boy, Torn Apart (9:14–29)

1. Text to Reader: A Boy is Raised

Mark's final and fullest exorcism story contains a bewildering array of characters, both major (Jesus; disciples; scribes) and minor (crowds; suppliants). The disciples make one of their rare appearances in a healing/exorcism scene, and are portrayed with more sympathy than usual. However, the readers are still aligned most strongly with the suppliants, of which there are two. Although the boy receives dramatic help from Jesus, the father, who is often overlooked,[1] also needs help. While the boy is torn apart by a spirit, the father is torn apart by his struggle with unbelief.

The scene flows out of a situation of conflict between scribes[2] and disciples (v.14). It is initially focalised through the four who have just descended, using an inside view of perception (εἶδον, v.14).[3] This is the first occasion on which the readers are aligned with (some of) the disciples. This can be explained as a consequence of the disciples having begun to move towards the narrator and readers. Since they have recognised Jesus as the Christ (8:29, cf. 1:1) and heard the voice on the mountain (9:7, cf. 1:11), the text is beginning to 'identify' them with the readers.

If this group is the focaliser, the crowd is the focalised (i.e. what the reader now looks at through their eyes).[4] The presence of the scribes makes the readers suspicious, since the religious leaders have been implicated in the death of John the Baptist (9:13, cf. 12) and in Jesus' own imminent death (8:31), which the readers recognise as the culmination of a plot hatched long ago (3:6). Since the topic of the debate is not supplied, a gap in the discourse is opened.

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1 Contrast Williams, 11, 47, 137–143, 164, for whom the man is the minor character.

2 The scribes should not be regarded as a superfluous detail because they so quickly disappear, cf. Taylor, 396f., Hooker, 223. Their importance is stressed by Swete, 195; Lane, 330; Gundry, 487.

3 Fowler, 121.

4 Rimmon-Kenan, 75f.

On seeing (ἰδόντες, v.15) Jesus, the crowd is 'overwhelmed with wonder' ἐξεθαμβήθησαν — which probably indicates that his appearance was still altered from the experience on the mountain[5] — and they rush towards him. Even if the focalised are viewed 'from within', this does not switch them to being the focaliser,[6] but this is simply another example of an external report using visual language (cf. 5:6). The group from the mountain realised the crowd had seen Jesus because it started rushing towards him and greeting him.

In the face of the onrush of the crowd, Jesus asks his disciples a question,[7] which is given in direct speech, enabling the readers to hear it for themselves (v.16). He inquires into the subject of the debate, showing that he shared the readers' ignorance.[8] Since he voices the readers' question, this promises a closure of the previously opened gap. Before the disciples can answer, a man from the crowd speaks up, calling Jesus διδάσκαλε (v.17), which may be respectful,[9] but in itself does not tell the readers much about how to evaluate this man as yet.[10] His answer reveals a context of opposition (v.18b), so more needs to be said before it can be perceived which 'side' he is on. Likewise, the statement that he brought his son to Jesus may indicate an 'expectation of deliverance based upon conviction',[11] but the scribal presence even throws this into doubt, since a person in need was possibly 'used' by Jesus' opponents once before (3:1–6).

However his lengthy description introducing the boy (vv.17b–18) does begin to promote sympathy with him and to focalise the scene through him. He reveals that the boy had a dumb spirit (πνεῦμα ἄλαλον) which caused many problems whenever it

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5 So Hooker, Gundry.

6 For these distinctions, see Rimmon-Kenan, 74f.

7 Although not the usual interpretation, I suggest that the two pronouns αὐτούς ... αὐτούς refer to the disciples and the scribes respectively.

8 Although the question asks 'why' they were disputing with the scribes, it seeks after the subject of the debate.

9 So Lane, 331, 'respectful'; Gundry, 488, 'honorific' [*sic*].

10 Cf. 4:38; 5:35; 10:17, 20; 10:35, 12:14, 19.

11 Lane, 331, who pictures the man as being 'deeply concerned'.

seized him. The seriousness of the boy's condition builds sympathy with him and with his father, whose concern begins to emerge. The revelation that the disciples were not strong enough (ἴσχυσαν) to cast the spirit out, increases the sense of tragedy and also acts as an indictment of the disciples and a foil for Jesus, who is the stronger one (1:7).[12]

Jesus answers 'them' (v.19, αὐτοῖς) by bewailing the faithless generation and asking questions about how long he will bear with them. When they brought the boy to Jesus, visual language once again appears (ἰδών, v.20),[13] not as an inside view of the spirit, but as an external report of what apparently happened. On seeing Jesus, the spirit convulsed the boy and he fell down foaming.

The boy is left like this on the ground while Jesus asked how long it had been like this for him (v.21). This introduces a delay in the resolution of the boy's problem, which enhances the expectation of a happy outcome. It also forces the readers to reflect on the problem further which promotes greater sympathy with the suppliants. The father answered the question ('from childhood'), but also supplied some extra information, which is all the more significant because unsolicited. He explained that the spirit had frequently tried to kill the boy by throwing him into the fire or the water (v.22). Although he had some doubts about Jesus' ability, probably stemming from the disciples' failed first attempt, his final desperate plea indicates that both suppliants (NB. plural) need help. When read against the new information (v.22a), his request is not simply for the removal of any spirit, but the removal of *a spirit that is bent upon killing his son.*

Jesus told him all things were possible for the believer (v.23), which redirects the blame for the disciples' lack of success (cf. v.18) to the man himself. The implicit summons to belief in the face of a death problem is reminiscent of that given to Jairus (5:36). Although unbelief is not a positive textual norm, the readers' sympathy is

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12 Gundry, 489.

13 Fowler, 121. The only other case of a visual perception being reported for a spirit appears in 3:11, where it is a case of an 'objective' sighting, rather than an inside view.

nevertheless sustained by his awareness of the problem (he is apparently not 'hard-hearted'), his insistence that he does believe, and his emotional cry for help (vv.23f.). At the same time, the paradoxical nature of his statement forces them to consider how both belief and unbelief can co-exist in the one person.[14] Jesus does not give him any extra help for his unbelief which suggests that what happens with the boy will also be a solution for his father. As for Jairus, the answer to fear/unbelief is trust that Jesus has things in hand, even in the face of death, or in the face of a spirit seeking to kill.

Jesus deals with the spirit when he sees a crowd running together — more visual language describing external observation. He directs the spirit to leave and never return (v.25), revealing that it is dumb and deaf. This recalls the man with a similar problem (7:31–37), which arouses the expectation of a similar successful cure.

However, what happens next is unexpected. After causing the boy to cry out, and after convulsing him, the spirit goes out of him as expected (v.26a; cf. 1:26; 5:13). But where a report of some response to the exorcism is expected (cf. 1:27), the readers encounter something new: as the spirit left, the boy 'became as though he were a corpse' (v.26b, ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ νεκρός). By adding a piece of intranarrative commentary, the narrator ensures that the boy's corpse-like state is registered by the readers: many bystanders were saying 'he has died' (ἀπέθανεν, v.26). The references to death are evidently most significant to the proper understanding of Mark's climactic exorcism.

The disciples had failed to cast this spirit out, and, although Jesus succeeded, in the process he has realised the father's fears. The boy appears to have been killed. But that was not the end of the story. Having seized the boy still lying corpse-like, Jesus 'raised him, and he arose' (v.27, ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀνέστη).[15] The twofold reference to his corpse-like state is answered by a twofold use of 'resurrection' language.[16] Recalling Jairus' daughter, the readers appreciate this scene, not just as an

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14 For the function of verbal paradoxes, see Fowler, 184f.

15 $\mathfrak{P}^{45vid}$ W k 1 $sy^{s.p}$ omit καὶ ἀνέστη, possibly because it was deemed redundant.

16 Nineham, 243 n.†.

exorcism, but as an exorcism which brings the dead to life; a corpse to resurrection.[17] Although the disciples were 'not strong enough' (v.18), Jesus did not have this problem.

The scene ends with a private discussion between Jesus and his disciples. The move to the house (v.28) puts some distance between the public events just completed, and privileges the readers to overhear the private reflection upon these events.[18] The disciples ask about their inability and, as one of a number of features ameliorating their failure, Jesus informed them that no-one can cast out this kind of spirit, except by prayer (vv.28f.). The kind of spirit which brings the constant threat of death (v.22, cf. v.26) seems to require special treatment. This ending to the scene underlines how essential it was for Jesus to be there. He alone could help this boy and his father. The disciples' inability is presented not to reflect badly upon them, but to highlight Jesus' ability: he was the one strong enough to defeat even this kind of spirit. He is the stronger one who can defeat the Prince of the corpses, the strong man himself (1:7; 3:22–30; 5:1–20).

This exorcism story contains the Gospel in miniature. Jesus announced that the kingdom was near (1:15) and riddled that it was necessary for the strong man, the prince of the *daimons*, to be bound before he can plunder his domain (3:27). This exorcism pictures this grand scheme in miniature: as with Mk 5:1–20, this story shows that 'the actions of the demons are violent, directed toward injury and death',[19] and yet Jesus restores the dead to life. The reason for the shift from death to resurrection is

> ... identified as due to the victory over the demon, i.e. Satan. Following upon the act of exorcism, the scene is depicted so as to make it evident that violence and death itself have been cast out. Jesus' cure of the epileptic boy is described in terms of resurrection.[20]

On the mountain, the three disciples had seen Jesus clothed in glory. On the way down, they discussed the anticipated resurrection day (9:9–10), and, in response to a

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17 Lane, 334.

18 Fowler, 211.

19 Robinson, 87.

20 Robinson, 87.

question, Jesus told them that only one event had to occur before that day would arrive. Since Elijah had already come, all that remained was for the Son of man to suffer before the resurrection and the kingdom of God would arrive. Having rejected the opportunity of apotheosis and descending the mountain with his face still gleaming from the experience, Jesus had then dealt decisively with the spirit of death. On the mountain, the discussion had anticipated the resurrection; at the base of the mountain, he had performed a resurrection. When the corpse-like boy was raised from the dead (9:26f.; ὡσεὶ νεκρός ... ἤγειρεν ..., καὶ ἀνέστη), it was a foretaste of the time when the Son of Man and others would rise from the amongst the corpses (v.9: ὅταν ... ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ; v.10: τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι). If the dead are being raised, then the kingdom must be very close indeed.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 The Boy and Death

2.1.1 The Explicit Problem

In this scene, death is the explicit problem (v.22). The father's believing-yet-unbelieving cry really amounts to another version of the mortality question: 'Do you not care that we are perishing?'. But the boy's condition is also linked with death in a number of other ways, which all recall elements of the previous discussion.

2.1.2 Epilepsy and Death

The boy's symptoms suggest that his illness was a case of 'epilepsy', as it is portrayed, for example, in the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease*. Mark does not use any of the words for this condition,[21] but instead, presents the boy as afflicted by a spirit. Nevertheless, an understanding of the so-called 'sacred disease' (Hipp. *Morb.sacr.*; Pl. *Ti.* 85B; cf. *Leg.* 916A; Plut. *Amat.* 755E) enables a greater appreciation of the depths of his problem.

According to *The Sacred Disease*, the disease arises from the production of phlegm in the brain which then filters down into the body. This can be brought about in

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21 *Morb.sacr.* itself only uses the term ἐπίληψις once, when referring to a seizure (Ch. 13).

a number of ways. Especially in children and the elderly, it can be caused when the head is heated in the sun or near a fire (cf. Mk 9:22) — which melts the phlegm in the brain—, and then chilled — which causes the phlegm to separate from the brain and flow down (*Morb.sacr.* 13). The disease is particularly severe in those who have suffered it 'from infancy' (ἐκ παιδίου, 13–14; cf. Mk 9:21).

As noted above, it was listed alongside paralysis as one of the 'afflictions concerning the sinews' (πάθη περὶ τὰ νεῦρα, Dsc. 3.78; ?Carlini32), although it was associated with their spasm (vv.20, 26) rather than their loosening. As a condition of the sinews, given the arguments already assembled, epilepsy was a serious illness bringing the presence of death into the body.

This conclusion is reinforced by its association with foaming at the mouth (cf. v.20) and chilling. The Hippocratic author explained the foam as coming from the lungs, 'for when the breath fails to enter them they foam and boil as though death were near' (*Morb.sacr.* 10). The convulsions (cf. vv.20, 22, 26) were linked to phlegm chilling and arresting the blood. The role of 'chilling' in bringing on death has already been noted and this holds true here. If the flow is copious and thick 'it kills automatically' (αὐτίκα ἀποκτείνει), for it overpowers the blood by its coldness.

As well as bringing death into the body of the living, epilepsy was a condition from which people actually died (*Morb.sacr.* 2). Although older people were generally not killed, the very old were either killed or paralysed (12), and children were especially prone to die — cf. the bald statement 'little children when attacked by this disease generally die' — and, when they do, it is once again through the chilling of their blood (11). The risks associated with fire have already been mentioned, and the fact that the 'purifiers' who were under attack in the essay refused to give the sufferers medicinal baths, so that they could not be blamed if the patient dies (2), may indicate that the risks associated with water (cf. Mk 9:22) were also well-known.[22]

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22 It was also believed to cause suicide by hanging especially in menarchal girls, cf. King, 113f.

When the boy remained on the ground 'as if a corpse', the crowd were quick to conclude that he was dead (v.26). Like them, the readers probably knew quite well that death was one possible outcome of an epileptic fit, and, in the case of a child, it was quite likely to occur.

2.1.3 The Deaf and Dumb Spirit

Apart from the specifically epileptic symptoms, the narrative describes the boy as afflicted with an unclean spirit, which is also identified as τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφὸν πνεῦμα (vv.17, 25; cf. 7:31–37).[23] The conclusions from the previous discussion (on Suppliant #10) can be reiterated: his deafness and dumbness also numbers him amongst those who are dead even though alive.

2.2 The Boy and the Dead

2.2.1 Epilepsy and the Dead

The material previously assembled has shown that conditions of the sinews, and deaf/dumbness could be caused by magical attacks. In particular, τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφόν recalls language from a number of curse tablets,[24] as does the connection with 'chilling'. Although epilepsy itself may not be mentioned in the curses, it is occasionally found in protective magic (PGM XCV.14–18; XCIV.1–14 [3rd/4th AD][25]) and its cures were sometimes specifically magical.[26] The principle that if something is magically protected then it was probably also magically caused[27] would suggest that people were just as suspicious of a *daimonic* origin of this illness, as they were of

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23 Gundry, 488, is probably right that the spirit was 'one that prevents him from speaking during seizures' (cf. Lucian *Philops.* 16; Plut. *De defectu* 438A–B), but this tends towards overdiagnosis.

24 It is also connected with death in the only other extant literary reference to a mute spirit (*De defectu* 438B), see below.

25 Daniel (1977), 149, improving on O'Callaghan and Proux. See also Barns and Zilliacus, #140 (5th/6th AD).

26 Human blood, smeared on the lips or drunk hot from a gladiator's fresh wounds, could cure epilepsy (Pliny *HN* 28.4), as well as water drunk from a murdered man's skull, the flesh of a beast slain by the same weapon as had killed a man, and goat's meat roasted on a funeral pyre (*HN* 28.8, 34, 226). For more bloody and death-related cures see Temkin, 22f.

27 The author of *Sacred Disease* suggests as much: 'he who by purifications and magic can take away such an affection can also by similar means bring it on' (*Morb.sacr.* 3).

others. The presence of epileptic symptoms may have been enough to signal that a person was under threat from the dead.

But in this case, Mark explicitly describes the boy's problem as being possessed by an unclean spirit, which can be regarded as a spirit of the dead (as argued above, on Suppliant #1). The spirit's many attempts to destroy him in the fire and the water[28] suits the violent and destructive nature of ghosts, as does the crying out (v.26). In this case, it seemed as though the ghost had even achieved its destructive aim despite being cast out.

How did the boy become afflicted by such a spirit? Alongside the scenarios already mentioned in discussion of the other suppliants, another possibility arises here.

2.2.2 Boys and Magic

In magic, many boys were used as mediums[29] and there may have even been a preference for epileptics.[30] Apuleius was accused of using such boy-magic:

> They asserted that I had taken a boy apart to a secret place with a small altar and a lantern ... and there so bewitched him with a magical incantation that he fell in the very spot where I pronounced the charm ... they should have added that the boy uttered many prophecies.
>
> (Apul. *Apol.* 42)

The spells show that they were often associated with lamp and water divination, which, for a person familiar with the use of boy-mediums, may be evoked by Mark's reference to fire and water (v.22). Would Greco-Roman readers have suspected that this boy had been used as a medium to contact the spirits of the dead? If so, something had obviously gone wrong.

Being a medium was not without its dangers and could even be life-threatening. Plutarch's prophetess, for example, when forced to receive the oracle's message against her better judgement, suffered from a mute spirit (cf. ἀλάλου καὶ κακοῦ πνεύματος οὖσα πλήρης) as here, and then died (*De defectu* 438A–B). The *daimons*

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28 Cf. the seventeenth Decan, who causes convulsions in the bath and in the street (TSol 18:21).

29 For the use of boys in magic cf. PGM V.1–53; 370–446, cf. VII.664–685; 348–58; 540–578; XIII.749–759; LXII.24–46; and frequently in PDM. Cf. Plut. *De defectu* 418B and *VitAp* 3.38. See further, Hopfner, 65–74. For the use of a boy medium in the early nineteenth century, along with methods which are reminiscent of those in the magical papyri, see Hull, 21–23.

30 Hull, 14.

were notoriously untrustworthy and instructions regarding the protection of the user are a constant feature of the magical recipes. Lamp divination aimed at bringing a *daimon* into the presence of the medium. In order to do so, if the boy sat staring into the water, or into a fire, the opportunity for destroying him was immediately at hand once the *daimon* was conjured. If a session involving these boys went wrong, it is not too extraordinary to imagine them being cast into the two 'tools of their trade' in order to damage, or to kill them (cf. v.22).

The evidence suggests that some boys did die as part of the magic.[31] This may explain a phrase in an early first century AD Jewish prohibition against magic: 'Make no potions, keep away from magical books | Do not apply your hand violently to tender children' (PsPhoc. 149). Since the untimely dead (ἄωροι) and those dying by violence (βιαιοθάνατοι) were two categories of powerful ghosts specifically used by the spells and curses (e.g. PGM CI.1–53), a violently killed youth would be a sought after commodity.

However, the boys' deaths may have been merely ritual, or perhaps simply some kind of death-like state (cf. PGM VII.549). Apuleius was supposed to have bewitched the boy so that 'he fell in the very spot where I pronounced the charm' (*Apol.* 42). In another interesting example, Proclus reports Clearchus of Soli's story of the time when Aristotle met an unnamed magician (between 347 and 345 BC)[32] who, with the help of a magic wand, drew out the soul from the body of a boy, leaving him corpse-like:

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31 For a ritual involving the heart of a boy PGM IV.2646. Simon Magus used a slain boy in *Clem.Rec.* 2.13. See discussion in Henrichs, 31–37, 69–72; Hopfner, 65–74.

32 Lewy, 207.

> He struck the boy with the wand, drew out his soul [or, life? τὴν ψυχήν], and, so to speak, guided it from the body with the wand, afterwards showing that the body was all the time lying motionless and undamaged, and that it remained insensible to the blows like a corpse (ὅμοιον ἀψύχῳ). The soul had meanwhile departed from the body: after having been led back to the body with the help of the wand, after entering, it told all (what it had seen). This experiment convinced all the other spectators as well as Aristotle that the soul could separate itself from the body.
>
> (Proclus 2.122, 22ff.)[33]

2.3 Death and Resurrection

Jesus commands it to come out and never return (v.25). This latter prohibition is also found in similar contexts (cf. *AJ* 7.2.5; 8.45-49; *VitAp.* 4.20; and, by implication, PGM IV.1254; 3015), as is the discussion of 'kinds' of *daimon* (v.29; cf. PGM IV.3040, 3080; V.165). He apparently knows his spirits, for his exorcism is so successful that he appears to kill the boy (v.26). How would the Greco-Roman reader familiar with boy magic respond to the news that Jesus had done something to the boy that had made him fall 'as if a corpse' (ὡσεὶ νεκρός)? Had he bewitched him, or ritually killed him, or had he actually put the boy to death in the interests of some further magical purpose?

This comes as quite a shock to the readers. This boy is presented as someone who has a condition which makes him live firmly under the shadow of death. He is possessed by a deathly spirit. He may have suffered years of abuse as a boy medium, constantly forced to engage with the dead and being exposed to their threat. Jesus deals with the spirit and apparently kills the boy. Has Jesus come to destroy the *daimons*, but in the process does he destroy their victims too?

But the initial shock reinforces the ultimate lesson. For when Jesus raises the boy, as if from the dead (v.27), someone who regarded *daimons* as ghosts would see a powerful demonstration that Jesus' dealings with the powers of the dead issued in 'resurrection life' for their victims.

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33 Text and translation from Lewy, 208f. Cf. Hengel (1974), 258.

4. Prediction #2: Entering the Kingdom (9:30–10:31)

The disciples do not understand the second passion prediction but they are too afraid to ask for an explanation (9:30–32). They argue about who is the greatest and Jesus resets their priorities by talking about eschatological realities. Using hyperbole, he stresses the importance of entering life (vv.44, 45), which he equates with the kingdom of God (v.47), rather than missing out on this future and ending up in Gehenna (vv.44, 45, 47), the eternal fire (vv.44, 48, cf. Isa 66:24).

In controversy over divorce, Jesus continues to indict the Pharisees' hardness of heart (10:5). Although the great ones of the land suffer from this problem, some children become the paradigm for entry into the kingdom (10:13–16), given their absolute dependency. When another great one asked how to inherit eternal life (v.17), he went away disappointed because he chose his earthly wealth above heavenly treasures (v.21). The disciples were shocked and Jesus told them that it was difficult for the wealthy (vv.23, 25), in fact for everyone (v.24), to enter the kingdom of God. When, in utter astonishment, they asked 'Who then can be saved?', Jesus answered not in terms of a type of person, or of personal character traits necessary for salvation, but in terms of what God would do. Jesus assured them that although entry to the kingdom was impossible for human beings, God would make it possible (v.27).

He then assured his disciples that they had made the right choice to leave everything in order to follow him (vv.28–31). He promised that they would receive recompense in this age, and, in the age to come, eternal life (v.30). For, in the great eschatological reversal, the 'first' (i.e. the great ones, cf. the rich man) will be the least, and the ones who are now regarded as the least (cf. the disciples), will be the greatest (v.31). In this promise, Jesus' message of the kingdom reaches its climax with a reference to the eternal life of the age to come, which, according to Dan 12:2, would follow the resurrection.

5. Prediction #3: The Way to the Kingdom (10:32–52)

The third passion prediction introduces the fact that the leadership of Israel will use the Gentiles, i.e. the Romans, as accomplices to put Jesus to death, after they mock him and scourge him (10:32–33). Once again he repeats the promise that this will be followed by resurrection. The coming kingdom is on the agenda for the sons of Zebedee, who ask Jesus if they can share positions of status when he comes in his glory (v.37; cf. 8:38). The ten others are indignant, so Jesus calls them aside to repeat his lessons on service (vv.41ff., cf. 9:33–36), concluding with an explanation of his own death as the Servant's death as a ransom for many (10:45; cf. Isa 53:10).[1] Given the argument of this thesis so far, this saying probably refers to Jesus ransoming others from death (cf. Ps 49:7–9),[2] although this also encompasses the other options canvassed (i.e. sin, Satan). The death of the Son of Man will be the ransom which brings others from death to life.

The first sub-section (8:31–9:29) stressed the necessity of the death of the Son of Man as the event to precede the kingdom. The second sub-section (9:30–10:31) stressed the need to enter the kingdom and that, although entry was impossible for human beings, God would make it possible. The third sub-section (10:32ff.) has now revealed the means by which God will make it possible. Entry to the 'glory' of the Son of Man, i.e. the kingdom of God, will come about through his death as a ransom for many. At this point, the narrative introduces the final suppliant.

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1 Jeremias (1971), 292f., 299.

2 Jeremias (1928), 144; Yarbro Collins (1992b), 69.

6. Suppliant #13: Following in the Way (10:46–52)

Like the previous section (4:35–8:26), Mark's central section (8:27–10:52) concludes with the cure of a blind man. Bartimaeus is Mark's last 'suppliant'.

1. Text to Reader: A Blind Beggar

The report of Jesus' party entering and leaving Jericho (v.46) continues the sense of movement towards Jerusalem (10:32–4). The suppliant is introduced by name twice — the Greek translation rather strangely preceding its Semitic original. Since naming encourages a degree of intimacy,[1] especially given the rarity of the practice with respect to suppliants,[2] the reader begins to be aligned with him. As with previous suppliants, he is characterised by his situation of need: he is τυφλὸς προσαίτης. His status of προσαίτης will be reinforced by his location, his action (vv.47, 48), and his meagre possessions (v.50). Although his name is known, the remainder of the scene refers to him only in terms of his need, i.e. as the blind man (vv.46, 49, 51). The description concludes by reference to his location on the periphery of the movement towards Jerusalem. Bartimaeus was not in motion, but he sat; and he was not on the road, but he sat παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν (v.46). This description shifts the readers' focus towards him and his rest-rather-than-motion causes it to linger. The scene is focalised clearly through him.

This is enhanced by an inside view of aural perception (v.47 ἀκούσας),[3] made all the more powerful by the provision of the actual words heard, i.e. 'interior speech'.[4] When he begins to cry out (v.47), the direct speech[5] allows the readers to hear his

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1 For naming as a signal of focalisation, see Rimmon-Kenan, 82f.

2 Apart from one other suppliant, Jairus (5:22), naming has been reserved for the disciples and John.

3 Fowler, 121.

4 Fowler, 125f., although he does not list this verse.

5 Not only does direct speech decrease the distance between the character and the readers, as normal, but the sheer amount of direct speech in this scene (vv.47a, 47b, 48b, 49a, 49b, 51a,

words for themselves as he calls out for the Son of David to have mercy on him. Although the meaning of his chosen title is not clear from the story, since no-one in the narrative, not even the narrator, has used it before, its novelty hints at Bartimaeus' insight. His request for mercy reminds the readers of the mercy shown to the Gerasene man (5:19f.) and raises the expectation that this blind beggar, so used to asking for alms, may receive something far greater on this occasion.

Before hearing whether or how Jesus responded to his cry, the readers hear of 'many' who commanded Bartimaeus to be silent (v.48a) rather strongly — ἐπιτιμάω was used previously of Jesus commanding *daimons* (1:25; 3:12; 9:25), or the wind (4:39, with σιωπάω), or recalcitrant disciples (8:30, 33, cf. 32). Although this group is not defined, they are naturally associated with Jesus which raises the question whether the beggar is being excluded officially from access to him (cf. 7:24). However, the presumption is tipped the other way, since Jesus did not appreciate the disciples' rebuke of the children (10:13–16), other obstacles have been overcome (2:1–12; 5:21–43; 7:24), and it has been almost completely impossible to silence people. This all suggests that this blockage does not come from Jesus and that it will be overcome.

Like others who could not be silenced (1:45; 7:36), the blind man simply calls out all the more (v.48b); the repetition adding urgency to his plea. His persistence and the negative evaluation of his detractors when read against previous textual norms (cf. 10:13–16) ensures that the readers continue to be aligned with Bartimaeus.

Given the determination with which Jesus has been moving towards Jerusalem (10:32; 10:46), it is quite dramatic when he comes to a standstill (v.49, στάς). This is reminiscent of the occasion when he interrupted the journey to heal Jairus' daughter in order to declare that the woman's faith had healed her (5:25–34). The pause in Jesus' movement brings him into Bartimaeus' and the readers' purview, but the readers are

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51b, 52) has the effect of slowing it down to almost a standstill, enabling its details to be thoroughly heard and absorbed.

not shifted into the role of observers just yet. They hear what Jesus' envoys say to the blind man, see him throw down his cloak, and watch him get up and go to Jesus (vv.49f.). All this shows that the readers are still focalised through the blind man at this stage.

The envoys' direct speech bids the blind man to have courage (θάρσει), which Jesus once used to calm the fearful disciples with his presence, implicitly urging them to have faith (cf. 6:50). They command him to arise (ἔγειρε) and add the encouragement, 'he is calling you' (φωνεῖ σε). When he cast aside his meagre possessions (the garment)[6] to go to Jesus (v.50), Bartimaeus fulfilled the requirement for potential followers to leave things behind (1:18; 1:20; 2:14; 8:34ff.; 10:21; 10:28).

Having travelled with the blind man to Jesus, the readers then become observers of the interaction. Jesus' question enables Bartimaeus to assert his need (v.51). This reminds the readers of the previous miraculous cure of a blind man (cf. 8:24) and so of the wider narrative significance of the blind/sight imagery. Jesus sends him away with a dismissal frequently used with those who have been healed (ὕπαγε, 1:44; 2:11; 5:19; 5:34; 7:29; cf. 10:21) and informs him that his faith had saved him (cf. 5:34). Immediately his sight was restored (v.52, contrast 8:22–26). However, instead of departing, the saved ex-blind beggar follows Jesus (cf. 1:17f.; 2:14f.; 5:24; 6:1; 8:34; 9:38; 10:32)[7] ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. So the last suppliant is the first of the group to succeed in becoming a follower (cf. 5:18f.).

As Jesus' final miracle,[8] the cure of Bartimaeus plays an important role in Mark's narrative. The scene brings a definite turn in narrative direction. This blind man, as well as his partner at the end of the previous section, are both concrete illustrations of the blindness/sight theme of such importance to Mark. The first cure, by showing that Jesus could make the physically blind see suggested that if the metaphorically blind

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6 'Perhaps the most striking feature in Bartimaeus's response', Williams, 157. He lists usual interpretations before suggesting the one followed here.

7 This time, Williams, 159, denies it is a case of disobedience since the way was open for anyone to follow Jesus after 8:34.

8 I ignore the curse of the figtree and Jesus' own resurrection.

were to see, Jesus would be the one to open their eyes. The second cure reinforced this lesson and also showed the cured man entering the mainstream movement of the story.

The role of the two as 'foils for the disciples' is well-known. On the metaphorical level, blindness has been equated with the lack of understanding which comes from the lack of faith. This was the state of Israel in general (4:12, cf. Isa 6:9) and the disciples have not proved any different, despite their companionship with Jesus. Since the text offered various indications that the unbelief of the disciples would be only temporary (4:40; 8:17), the healing of the blind man at the end of Section 2 (8:22–26) held out the hope that Jesus would overcome their metaphorical blindness. By the end of this central section (8:27–10:52), this hope has not been completely realised, although it must be asserted against the tendency to damn the disciples too quickly that it has begun. This section has painted a far more positive portrait of the disciples than the previous one (4:35–8:26) and has shown them growing in their understanding. They have correctly recognised that Jesus is the Christ (8:27–30), although further instruction was still required (8:31–9:1). The voice from heaven repeating the commissioning Jesus received at his baptism provided three of the disciples with the same insight given the readers at the beginning (9:7; cf. 1:11). Jesus has continued to teach them about what lies ahead (the kingdom, his own death and resurrection), and about what it means for them to keep following him in this direction.

However, even as they gain more insight into the future (9:9–13), they show an inadequate grasp of what this entails (10:13–16; 10:35–45, esp. 37, 40, 41) and they still fail (9:18, 28f.;[9] 10:13–16), lack understanding and are afraid (9:32).[10] In contrast, although the readers are unaware of what Bartimaeus knows about the future, they are well aware that, having received mercy through faith, he eagerly heads for it. In this

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9 Although, as mentioned above, this scene is not as negative towards the disciples as is often made out.

10 Nevertheless, the section portrays them with great sympathy. Even the reference to 'fear', for example, is offered as an explanation for their lack of understanding which therefore promotes sympathy, not judgement.

sense it can be said that 'Bartimaeus, who believes, sees and follows, now exemplifies what it means to fulfil the demands of Jesus.'[11]

The hope for the disciples' 'cure' erected at the end of the previous section has been only partially achieved. After the disciples' more sympathetic treatment in this section, Jesus' cure of the second blind man sustains the hope that their 'cure' may be completed. Bartimaeus (and the minor characters after him) cannot be their replacement,[12] for the narrative has not dispensed with them.[13] They will continue to provide some continuity throughout the passion narrative, where they will certainly fail, but will nevertheless be treated sympathetically.[14] Instead of Mark's final suppliant replacing the disciples, he joins them as they journey towards Jerusalem behind the one who has shown him mercy. Whereas the first blind man was removed from the narrative (8:26), the second joins the mainstream narrative movement. Since the readers have been identified with him,[15] as they have been with all the suppliants so far, they too move from the periphery, to join the central movement towards Jerusalem 'in the way.'

When the beggar receives mercy and Jesus declares him to have been saved, this story links in with another crucial Markan theme. When Jesus was about to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, he had asked whether it was lawful to save a life, or to kill (3:4). Thus, from its first occurrence, σώζω has overtones of bringing life where there was death, even in a case of a 'mere' healing. These overtones were reinforced in the intercalated miracles of Mk 5:21–43, where Jairus asks Jesus to lay his hands on his daughter ἵνα σωθῇ καὶ ζήσῃ (5:23). His request came when she was

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11 Williams, 166.

12 *Pace* Williams, 170.

13 The significance of Bartimaeus as the suppliant with whom the readers *begin* to identify loses a lot of its force when the suppliants' reader-engaging function is properly analysed. He is then not significant as the first with whom the readers 'identify', but as the first who joins the main movement of the story.

14 On the sympathetic treatment of Peter, for example, see (Boomershine 1987), cf. Boomershine and Bartholomew.

15 This is readily acknowledged, even if the means of 'identification' is usually explained in terms of 'positive traits'; cf. Bassler, 167; Williams, 166, 170.

at the point of death, but she subsequently died and Jairus received even more than anyone could hope for. She was not merely saved and given life from the point of death, but was saved out of death itself and lived again by resurrection. The story of the resurrected girl also affected the story of the haemorrhaging women intercalated within it. Whereas the woman wanted to be saved from her bleeding problem (5:28), Jesus eventually declared that her faith had saved her (5:34; cf. 10:52). Her affliction had brought her to the end of her life, making her one of the living dead, but Jesus had given her life instead of death. After σώζω acquiring these overtones of being saved from death, the readers would also hear them echoed in the final summary report of Jesus' Galilean activity (6:54–56), when many came to touch Jesus in a similar manner and found that they too were 'saved' (6:56).

If the first half of the Gospel encouraged σώζω to be read as a saving from death, this was only reinforced after the turning point (8:27–30). Jesus called people to save their life through following him (8:34), being prepared to lose their life for his sake and the gospel's (8:35) which was a real choice between life and death. Jesus' paradox reversed the normal and logical human viewpoint (cf. 8:33) in favour of the opinion that life is found by following him to death on a cross. Jesus was calling people to follow him onwards to death, in the hope of being saved by resurrection (cf. v.31).

The next sub-section had reinforced this by speaking of entering the kingdom (10:13–16, 23–25), inheriting eternal life (10:17) and of gaining treasure in heaven (v.21; cf. 8:36f.). When the rich man had left crestfallen, having chosen his earthly treasure, the disciples had asked the question: 'then who can be saved?' (v.26). Jesus had answered the disciples in terms of God making the impossible possible (v.27) before assuring his disciples that they had made the right choice to follow him, because this was the way to eternal life in the age to come (v.30). Clearly in this context, 'to be saved' is equivalent to inheriting eternal life, having treasure in heaven, entering the kingdom of God, and having eternal life in the age to come. Thus, when Jesus declares Bartimaeus to be saved, the narrative has already erected the framework against which this declaration can be understood. The blind man has been saved from death and has

been given life, even life fit for the kingdom. The disciples' question 'who then can be saved?' has been given a narrative answer: someone like Bartimaeus.[16] But what is it about him that has led to salvation?

In view of the tendency to identify positive character traits, it is necessary at this point to state that he has not contributed anything concrete to his salvation. The faith by which he was saved is not so much a character trait, or a quality, but a persistent begging for mercy. His status as a beggar is the feature which makes him a paradigm disciple. The story illustrates faith by showing him as the adult counterpart to the child (cf. 10:13–16), namely, as a beggar who has nothing to offer and even leaves what he has in order to plead for mercy. His faith led to this request and, when mercy was extended to him, he was saved and embarked upon a new journey.

The kingdom focus in this section also colours the nature of the journey with which it ends. Although it is true that Bartimaeus 'exemplifies' the characteristics recommended for any follower of Jesus, the concrete details of the story prevent him from becoming simply some abstract character 'type'. His journey was not abstract at all, but it had a definite destination. Although the Gerasene had wanted to go with Jesus (5:18f.), but had not been permitted, and anyone who wished to come with Jesus to do so in full cognisance of the direction he was taking had been invited to do so (8:34–9:1), Bartimaeus was the first person who has responded to the invitation. As a representative of the suppliants with whom the readers have been identified, they too, at this point, move from the periphery in order to join the journey alongside the others.

The journey's destination is well-known to the readers.[17] At the most basic level, the movement of the characters within the story is towards the story's end in Jerusalem (10:32–34; cf. 8:31; 9:31) and the readers now journey with them to see whether expected events unfold. However, even at the beginning of the story, 'the way' had additional overtones, for the initial citations from Malachi and Isaiah both called for the

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16 So too, Williams, 166, although he deals with Bartimaeus' faith in isolation from his request for mercy.

17 On the way motif, see Malbon (1986), 68–71, 104–105; Rhoads and Michie, 64–65.

preparation of the way of the Lord (1:2f. LXX) who was expected to come bringing judgement and salvation. The 'way' became more prominent in this section (?8:27; 9:33f.; 10:17, 32, 46, 52), helping to sustain the movement towards Jerusalem.

In the course of moving towards Jerusalem, the way also acquired a further metaphorical dimension as a journey towards the kingdom. The section is structured around the three predictions raising the expectation of Jesus' death followed by resurrection. When Jesus told his disciples that the one event yet to occur before the arrival of the resurrection day and the kingdom was the suffering of the Son of Man (9:10–13), he associated his coming death with the coming kingdom. The expectation of the imminent kingdom and the urgent need to enter it is particularly prominent in the section: (kingdom: 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; [eternal] life: 8:35–38; 9:43, 45; 10:17, 30; treasure in heaven: 10:21, cf. 8:35f.; and Jesus' glory: 8:38; 10:37, cf. 40). Thus, as the journey heads towards his death in Jerusalem, the journey also progresses towards the resurrection day and the kingdom of God.

Thus Bartimaeus is not simply a picture of 'discipleship', or 'following', or 'faith', in any abstract sense, but he is an example of a person who has begun following Jesus on 'a path that leads necessarily to suffering.'[18] But, as we have seen, since Jesus' death is associated with the resurrection and the coming kingdom, when Bartimaeus steps onto this path, it is not just a path towards suffering, but towards the resurrection by way of whatever suffering or shame may happen to lay ahead. He has taken up his cross to follow Jesus into the kingdom (cf. 8:34–9:1).[19] He is on the way towards eternal life in the age to come (cf. 10:17, 30).

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18 Williams, 162.

19 When contrasting Bartimaeus with the rich man, Williams, 166, says of the latter that 'the path to the kingdom of God is too hard, the cost of eternal life too high' and yet fails to draw the parallel with Bartimaeus' destination.

2. Reader to Text

2.1 Blindness, Death, and the Dead

Enough has been said above (on 8:22–26) to establish that the blind were amongst the living dead, and that blindness could be one of the weapons wielded by the dead at the orchestration of magical art. The point flowing out from the Bartimaeus narrative is that the blind beggar asks for mercy, emerges from a living death and joins the path towards a future resurrection.

2.2 The Son of David

Solomon was widely recognised as having magical powers.[20] If the Greco-Roman readers knew of his reputation and recognised him in the title used here, then this would reinforce Jesus' reputation as a worker of 'magic'. In addition to being a reminder that his 'magical' abilities were powerful enough to cure the blind (cf. 8:22–26), this story would then also provide a reason for his magical ability, by virtue of his family connection with David/Solomon.

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20 Cf. 11QPsAp^{a}; *AJ* 8.45-49; Kotansky and Spier, 323 n.35; DT**242**.15 = Gager**10**; TSol Greek Title.

Chapter 6: The Clash of Kingdoms (11:1–13:37)

The fourth main section presents the story's 'rising action',[1] as events begin to head inevitably towards the promised death of the Son of Man which will be followed by the promised resurrection. The section begins with a clear temporal and geographical patterning which builds momentum towards the events in Jerusalem.[2] It spans three days. The first two days establish the geographical pattern: a journey from Bethany to Jerusalem and back (Day 1: 11:1–11; Day 2: 11:12–19). On the third day, the same pattern commences: the morning journey to Jerusalem (11:20) ends in the temple (11:27). Although the journey home begins as they move away from the temple (13:1) across the Mount of Olives (13:3), its conclusion is never reported, even though it is assumed to have occurred (14:3). The journey home is delayed on the mount of Olives while Jesus delivers his longest speech which functions as a narrative aside, i.e. it creates a pause in the movement in order to reflect on the narrative. Because of the open-ended third day, the entire section (11:27–13:37) reads as a connected sequence, with the three days functioning together to bring the narrative to its crisis.[3]

1. Day #1: The Coming Kingdom of David (11:1–11)

The first day is filled with expectation, but nothing happens. Jesus enters Jerusalem in a manner which appears to make a deliberate messianic claim.[4] Whether or not the crowd realise what is going on, their words have great significance, sustaining the readers' expectation of the coming kingdom (vv.10f.).

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1 'That part of a play which precedes the climax'; Cuddon, 575.

2 Smith (1989a), 105-6.

3 'That point in a story [...] at which the tempo reaches a maximum and resolution is imminent', Cuddon, 166.

4 Smith (1989a), 121; Hooker, 257–9.

His arrival in the temple creates an expectation of action (11:11), and, since nothing occurs, suspense: what he had seen? and what he will do?

2. Day 2: The Harvest is not ready (11:12–19)

On the second day, two events occur, but nothing is explained. Firstly, Jesus seeks some fruit from the tree, but it was not the season for it so he cursed the tree with barrenness. Mark's unexplained comment that the disciples heard him adds to the suspense. Secondly, Jesus upsets the traffic in the temple. Despite the debate over whether this action is a cleansing or a prophecy of destruction, within the narrative it is directed at the leadership of Israel. Jesus cites Isa 56:7 and then adds Jer 7:11, saying, 'but you (ὑμεῖς δέ) have made it "a den of robbers"' (v.17). The text immediately reveals the referent for the emphatic pronoun when the chief priests and scribes hear what he said and begin seeking a way to destroy him (v.18). The action in the temple is not against the structure as such, but against Israel's power-brokers who had allowed it to become a commercial venture.

3. Day 3: The Clash of the Kingdoms (11:20–13:37)

3.1 The Explanation: the Figtree (11:20–26)

The next day provides a series of reflections upon the events of Day 2. When they saw the figtree was now withered, Peter remembered that they had heard Jesus' curse, and drew Jesus' attention to the fact (vv.20f.). Jesus' reply, although difficult to interpret, need not be understood as peripheral or opportunistic, but can be explained in terms of the ongoing story-line. If ἔχετε (v.22) is taken as indicative not imperative,[5] it indicates that the substance of Jesus' answer is grounded on the faithfulness of God. Since 'this mountain' (v.23) was the Mt of Olives, which they crossed twice each day, his statement can be taken as a dramatic re-statement of the prophecy of Zechariah

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5 Lane, 410.

(14:10, 14) which promised that Palestine would be a plain from Jerusalem to the sea, the Mt of Olives being split in two and levelled.[6] Thus the mountain moving is a call upon God to be faithful to his promises. The one who does not doubt that this prophecy is becoming a reality will have the pleasure of seeing it come true. Against this background, the prayer (v.24) would be specifically concerned with the coming of the kingdom; πάντα ὅσα referring to actual requests, and the present tenses προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε, — taken together 'asking in prayer' — suggest that Jesus is addressing current hopes and prayers in which the disciples share, i.e. 'the things you are actually asking in prayer'. ἐλάβετε therefore points to the fact that their hopes are fulfilled (namely, in Jesus), urging the disciples to continue to believe (present imperative πιστεύετε) that the prophetic expectations are fulfilled in him. It is as they believe this that they will find it to be true (cf. 4:25) and they will enter the kingdom. As they pray for the kingdom, they need to live out its characteristic forgiveness (v.25).

Because this discussion was in response to Jesus' curse on the figtree, it must also have something to do with him acting upon a scriptural promise which indicated that the end was near. Although other options have been proposed, Mic 7:1ff. provides the best Scriptural backing. There the prophet's misery is likened to one who cannot find an early fig to eat. This is an image of Israel being so badly in ruins due to the corruption of the leadership (vv.3f.) that there is not one godly man to be found (v.2), but the day of God's visitation has come when he will shepherd his flock as he did in days long gone (vv.14ff.).

Jesus' action shows that the same situation prevails in the Israel of his day. The land has been devastated through the corruption of the leadership, the end is nigh, the kingdom of God has drawn near. The Son of Man must yet suffer, but that is the last thing that must occur before the resurrection from the dead and the arrival of the age to

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6 Lane, 410. Plut. *De I et O* 370C mentions a similar belief amongst the Chaldeans, in association with the future resurrection.

come. Jesus therefore encourages his disciples to keep on believing that their eschatological hopes are fulfilled in him (11:20–26).

3.2 The Explanation: the Temple (11:27–12:12)

In the next unit (11:27–33), the religious leaders once again question his authority, this time reflecting on his action in the temple ('these things'). The riddle about John enables him to avoid a direct answer and also reminds the readers of the importance of John in the story so far. He was Jesus' forerunner, in accordance with Isaianic prophecies (1:3–8), whose fate contained a foreshadowing of Jesus' own suffering (1:14; 6:14–29), but, most importantly, Jesus has hinted that his suffering was that of Elijah, which meant that that awaited eschatological event has occurred and there is only the suffering of the Son of Man to occur before the resurrection from the dead and the kingdom of God would arrive (9:11–13). Although Jesus' opponents decline to answer Jesus' riddle, Mark's readers know by what authority Jesus has acted. He was divinely commissioned as the servant-Son (1:11) and has offered an alternative leadership which has brought him into conflict with those who are currently pretending to act in that capacity.

Although he refused to directly answer their question, once Jesus had regained the initiative, he answered it in a parable (12:1–12). It re-issues Isaiah's parable (Isa 5:1–7), in which the ruin of Israel was caused by the nation's leaders (Isa 3:13–15, cf. 1:23; 3:1–7), for it was they who, through political alliances, idolatry and magic (Isa 1:29–31; 2:6–9, 12–18, 22), led the decline which resulted in the death of the nation in the exile (cf. Isa 5:13f.).

In Jesus' elaboration of Isaiah's parable the expectation of a harvest, the tenants' resistance to the landlord and the son who is abused and killed can all find counterparts in Mark's preceding story. The parable suggests that the tenants resist the landlord in an endeavour to maintain their position in the vineyard, so that they can reap its harvest for themselves (cf. Ezek 34–36). The clear allusion to the voice from heaven in the baptismal scene (12:6, cf. 9:7 and 1:11), ensures that the reader recognises Jesus in the parabolic son and so his opponents as the tenants who end up killing him. When Jesus

finishes, his opponents also make the same equation, with the result that they continue to search for a way to arrest him (12:12; cf. 3:6, 11:18).

3.3 The Confrontation (12:13–44)

Their attempt to arrest him issues in a series of controversies which seek to trap him in his words (12:13), which the readers recognise is laden with the intent to arrest Jesus and to kill him (3:6; 11:18; 12:12). He is questioned about paying tribute (12:13–17), about the resurrection from the dead (12:18–27), and about the greatest commandment (12:29–34).

3.3.1 Rendering to God (12:13–17)

Wherever Rome went, taxation inevitably followed. The use of κῆνσος here (12:14b) implies the poll tax, the notorious *tributum capitis* (φόρος σωμάτων) — the one denarius per head provincial subjects were required to pay using imperial coinage.[7] Of course, in any patronage system there would always be questions of the rightness of the exacted amounts (cf. Aristotle's poor man saying: 'This is sport to you, but death to me'; *EE* 1243ª20), but there were also larger issues at stake. As Tacitus has the Roman general Cerialis say, after he suppressed a revolt in Trier: 'You cannot secure tranquillity without armies, nor maintain armies without pay, nor provide pay without taxes; …' (Tac. *Hist.* 4.74). The payment of taxes secured the Pax Romana, and, since this was a military peace, through taxes the provinces were buying their own subjugation. It is little wonder that the question whether to pay or not was a live issue.

The coins themselves were not only legal tender, but they provided a value judgement on the character and role of the individual portrayed. This could be used to advantage from both directions: the subject nations could use them to represent their recognition and respect of the emperor, but, alternatively, they could also be used as an instrument of the imperial propaganda.[8] In the tradition of the Hellenistic kings, Julius Caesar was the first Roman to put himself on coins as a claim to divinity, but he was

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7 Finney, 632.

8 Huzar), 3095.

not the last. Augustus 'made an unprecedented use of coins, with special captions and symbols.'[9] Pontius Pilate had introduced into Judea the coin of Tiberius which stated he was 'son of the deified Augustus',[10] and, on the reverse, Pax seated in the guise of a priestess, with the superscription: PONTIF MAXIM, which meant that both sides were 'equally impregnated with religious propaganda offensive to Jews'.[11] The coins were a constant presence reminding the provinces that 'God has settled in Italy' (*BJ* 5.366f., cf. 2.362).

So should they pay or not pay? The cleverness of the trap is well-known. At least one former Roman collaborator had left his occupation to throw in his lot with Jesus, maybe more (2:14f.), so what will their Master say? Jesus answer is equally as masterful. He requests a coin which apparently has to be fetched,[12] which causes a pause in the flow of the dialogue while the antagonists 'rummage through their pockets'.[13] By this means the dialogue is shifted to another level of discourse, from his person to a thing. It may be that this shift would divide his questioners, since the aniconism of Palestine was dealt with differently by different groups. Apparently the Essenes refused to touch a coin because Jews were forbidden to carry or look at or make images (Hippol. *Ref.* 9.21), and here it may be that the Pharisees would have taken umbrage at the suggestion to look at it; whereas the Herodians would not.[14]

Jesus' response sets the question in terms of legitimate spheres of authority. If the coin is Caesar's, then what is the problem in giving back his property? But the duty with respect to God is a separate issue, and what expresses the image of God's, i.e.

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9 Barnett, 6.

10 Barnett, 7; Finney, 632

11 Finney, 633. It was also propaganda 'with teeth', cf. Philostr. *VitAp.* 1.15 in which a master who strikes his slave who was carrying a coin bearing the image of Tiberius is found guilty of *asebeia.*

12 'This detail may confirm what is known from other provincial contexts — namely, that the imperial denarius was not a denomination used in common, everyday market exchange', Finney, 632.

13 Finney, 631, upon whom I rely for this section.

14 Finney, 640.

human life, must be given back to him. His answer to the first trap produces utter amazement (v.17).

3.3.2 The Resurrection of the Dead (12:18–27)

The Sadducees ask the second question which begins as a question about levirate marriage, but its real concern is the resurrection of the dead, as Mark indicates (v.18). They attempt to bring the belief in resurrection (which they do not hold) into conflict with the Law by means of a case study. The case study most probably draws upon the book of Tobit, which, as I have argued elsewhere, sustains the resurrection hope by way by narrative means.[15] Because Israel's exile still continues and that the nation is under God's judgement, Tobit pictures Israel as blind, barren and subject to the *daimon* of death, and in great need of rescue by their kinsman-redeemer. Since Tobit's solution to these problems is a series of movements from 'death to life', I have suggested that the book can be understood as an attempt to keep the hope of resurrection alive. If so, the Sadducees' use of the story as a critique of this hope is a shrewd move.

Their question is not an attack on a random feature of what Jesus stands for, but it is an attack on the central aspect of Jesus' teaching and ministry. By attempting to ridicule the resurrection hope, they have attacked the notion of a coming kingdom which the resurrection will inaugurate. The implication of their attempted argument *ad absurdum* is that life is all about 'now', for there is no 'then'. Jesus argues from the Law that God is the God of the living, not the dead. Although marriage is a thing for this age, in the age to come God will certainly make his people 'like the angels', i.e. they will live eternally (Philo *Sacr.* 5, cf. *QG* 3.11).

But why these questions? In the context of Mark's narrative, both controversies gain greater significance. The use of the image, underlines that Mark is making counter-claims to those of the emperor for Jesus. The king's image is the presence of the king. Similarly, the Sadducean question is not just an interesting point of theological debate, but, since it attacks the resurrection from the dead, it has gone to the heart of Jesus'

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15 See Bolt (1994).

message about the kingdom of God, for the preaching of the kingdom is, at one and the same time, the preaching of the resurrection of the dead. Thus both these controversies are kingdom controversies: Who is the real king, Caesar or God? What is the nature of these kingdoms? Are the Sadducees right to reject a future resurrection and to curry favour with the kingdoms of this world? Or is Jesus right to proclaim a kingdom of the age to come, in which people will live forever, just like the angels? The God to whom human lives must be rendered is also the God of the living, whose promises to his people endure even when their earthly life comes to an end.

3.3.3 Close to the Kingdom (12:28–34)

The final question comes from a scribe. In terms of previous narrative norms, by being labelled 'one of the scribes' (v.28) he is automatically identified as one of Jesus' opponents. Given the immediate context of opposition, his question about the greatest commandment is also most naturally read as an attempt to trap Jesus. However, by the end of the incident he has recognised Jesus' wisdom (vv.32f.) and has apparently moved close to the kingdom of God (v.34a). This brings the hostile questioning to an end (v.34b). This story represents the defeat of the scribes. Their plot to trap Jesus in his words has failed: one of their own number has been forced to 'change sides' and it is no longer possible to ask any more questions. They have been silenced.[16] If they are to succeed in their plans to destroy Jesus, they will require a new strategy (cf. 14:1, 10f.).

Jesus now begins openly to question the scribal teaching on the Messiah (12:35–37) and to warn the crowds against them (12:38–40), before commenting upon a tragic example of the human misery they have caused (12:41–44).

3.3.4 A Messianic Puzzle (12:35–37)

Once his opponents' plot has failed, Jesus goes on the attack. He questions the adequacy of the scribal teaching on the Christ being David's son, by introducing a puzzle based upon Ps 110:1. Although the puzzle receives no answer here, the readers

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16 Cf. Smith (1989a), 118; Smith (1989b), 177f.

have some hints at a partial answer, for, if Jesus is God's son, and Christ, then it would be appropriate for David to call the Christ his 'Lord'. This puzzle therefore indirectly continues the narrative's interest in the identity of Jesus.

3.3.5 The Warning against the Scribes (12:38–40)

Jesus warns the crowds against siding with the scribes, whose behaviour shows them to be self-interested and exploitative. These outwardly religious men, devour those whom they are most supposed to protect (cf. Isa 1:23). Jesus warns the crowds against them, for their judgement will be most severe and it will presumably also fall upon those under their influence. In this way, this warning indirectly continues the narrative's portrayal of Jesus as an alternative leader for Israel.

3.3.6 The Plunder of Israel (12:41–44)

The widow provides a tragic illustration of Israel's ruin. No matter what godly motives she may have had for contributing her coins to the temple tax, the narrative point of the story is to provide a case study of the failure of Israel's leadership to care for God's people.[17] She is one who should have been protected, and yet they have devoured her house (cf. v.40). Since her gift was from her utter poverty, 'the devourers' have taken away 'her whole life' (ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς, v.44). By bringing her to economic ruin, they have, in effect, killed her. This scene indirectly reveals the ruin into which the failed leadership has plunged the nation.

The widow's tragic story would strike chords for Greco-Roman readers who were aware of one of the great changes brought to Greco-Roman societies by the imperial cult. When Tacitus reports on the worship of Claudius in Britain (*Ann.* 14.31), he remarks that the men who had been picked for priestly office 'were bound under the pretext of religion to pour out their fortunes like water.' This is illustrated from the many inscriptions recording the gifts of various people to the cult.[18] It is of little consequence that Israel may have avoided the imperial cult as such, for the Greco-Roman readers would recognise in this story a practice analogous to that of their own

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17 See Wright, whose arguments are not overturned by Malbon (1991).

18 Cf. discussion of the Galatian examples in Mitchell, 108–11.

society. The cult officials were selected from the aristocratic families of the conquered territories, as the Jewish leaders had been.[19] The local temple worship was one of the ways the imperium continued to plunder the provinces, managing to keep control of the aristocracy, whilst at one and the same time increasing their local power and prestige.[20] Thus, although some might complain about the poll-tax, this money to the temple was indirectly, and so perhaps even more powerfully, supporting the same imperial subjugation of the nation. The shepherds have not only plundered the flock, but, as was the practice throughout the empire, they have even fed them to the wolves.

The widow epitomises Israel's ruin. The nation has been robbed and it now lives in a state of death, for the 'devourers' have taken the last two pence.

3.4 The Explanation: the Son of Man (13:1–37)

The climax of this section is the so-called 'apocalyptic discourse', whose interpretation is fraught with difficulty. Following the lead of R.H. Lightfoot, I have previously argued for an intra-narrative understanding of this chapter, in which Jesus' Olivet discourse is read as an apocalyptic preparation for the events about to unfold in the passion narrative.[21]

The speech warns the disciples of the special problems associated with being a part of Jesus' cause in a world where 'kingdom rises against kingdom', before telling them of two key events for which the disciples are to watch, both of which draw upon Daniel. There will be a time of distress, such as the world has never known (v.19; cf. Dan 12:1) — nor, adds Jesus, will such a time ever be seen again. This will be followed by the coming of the Son of Man and the subsequent gathering of the elect (vv.24–27). Both events signal the arrival of the kingdom (v.29, translating 'it' rather than 'he'; cf. 1:15). In Daniel, the great distress preceded the resurrection from the dead

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19 'Caesar appeared in Palestine as the one who settled quarrels within Judaism over the leadership,' Wengst, 20, citing *BJ* 1.199f.

20 Rivalry in public benefactions could be taken for granted amongst the successive holders of office, and 'the liberality and public generosity of the wealthy [was] designed in the first place to confirm the prestige of the donor and to secure in the widest sense his political authority,' Mitchell, 112.

21 Bolt (1991a), now summarised in Bolt (1995). Cf. Lightfoot.

(Dan 12:1–2), and the coming of the Son of Man represented his ascent to the throne of the Ancient of Days to receive the kingdom of God which would never pass away (Dan 7:13–14, cf. 2:44); a kingdom which was then shared with the saints (7:22), presumably also through resurrection (Dan 12:2f.).

This sequence is placed before the disciples and they are told to watch for it. Lightfoot argued that the passion narrative was structured around the expectations erected by Mark 13, especially signalled by the time references in the final parable (vv.32–37). This suggestion can be extended to say that the expectations find their fulfilment respectively in the crucifixion of Jesus (the great distress) and in his vindication in the resurrection (= the coming of the Son of Man). Such an understanding will be assumed in the comments to follow.

4. Preparation for the Passion Narrative

In this section the clash between Jesus and his opponents has reached a crisis. Throughout the section Jesus appears to be firmly in charge,[22] which gives the impression that he provokes his own passion. He enters Jerusalem as a king, surrounded by acclamations that suggested the hoped-for kingdom was near; but Israel was in ruins because of the nations leadership; he encourages his disciples to keep seeing him as the fulfilment of their nation's hopes; but the leadership continue to resist his divine appointment, in their own self-interest; they attempt to destroy him by trapping him with questions, but they fail; he, in turn, indicts them for their misguided Christological understanding and their exploitative behaviour, which has led to Israel's death; he then sets the disciples sights onto the prospect of a terrible distress followed by the coming of the Son of Man and the kingdom of God. He lifts their eyes from the ruin all around them, and asks them to watch, instead, for these things which will most certainly be coming (13:32), and they will be coming very soon indeed (13:30).

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22 'Jesus appears to be beyond the opponents' power', Tannehill (1980), 77.

Chapter 7: The Coming of the Kingdom (Mk 14–16)

Since the story has already erected the interpretative framework for the events of the passion narrative, they simply need to unfold.

1. Preparation for Jesus' Death (14:1–31)

1.1 The Plot and the Anointing (14:1–11)

Each of the three scenes in the initial 'sandwich' (14:1–11) prepares for Jesus' death: the first negatively, when the leaders reissue the plot to kill Jesus (vv.1f.; cf. 3:6; 8:31; 9:13; 9:31; 10:31; 12:13) after it had come to a standstill with the 'defeat' of the scribe (12:28–34); the second positively, as the woman anoints Jesus in preparation for his burial (vv.3–9); and the third negatively, as Judas provides the high priests with the vehicle by which their plot can become a reality (vv.10f.; cf. 3:19).

It is now clear that Jesus' predictions of his death will be fulfilled, which heightens the expectation that his predictions about the coming resurrection and the kingdom will also be fulfilled, since his death was all that had to occur before the arrival of these major events.

1.2 Passover Predictions (14:12–25)

During the celebration of the Passover Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for his death and the narrative reinforces the readers' expectations by providing predictions and fulfilments. The preparations unfold as announced (vv.12–16). Jesus tells the disciples of the betrayal of which the readers had learned in the initial scenes (vv.17–21). Their reaction underlines the horrific nature of Jesus' betrayal by one of them. Jesus further prepares for his death by explaining that it will be the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many (v.24; cf. 10:45) as a Passover sacrifice (cf. Isa 53:10).[1] Since the death of the son of Man was previously presented as the ransom by which God made the impossible possible, enabling people to enter the kingdom

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1 Jeremias (1971), 292f.

(10:45), it is no surprise that the expectation of the coming kingdom makes yet another appearance at this point (v.25). Having spoken of his death as a covenant sacrifice, Jesus looks ahead to the kingdom feast. His prediction that this will be his last meal until the kingdom reinforces the expectation of its imminent arrival.

As the hour heads towards midnight, they go to the Mount of Olives where Jesus predicts that they will all fall, in accordance with Zechariah's prophecy (v.27). Peter's protest of loyalty is met with the prediction that he too will deny Jesus before cock-crow (vv.29f.). As the disciples deny that they will fall when their shepherd is struck down, their commendable loyalty arouses sympathy (v.31).

2. The Hour is Come! (14:32–52)

2.1 Alone in the Will of God (14:32–42)

The scene in Gethsemane is filled with emotion as Jesus faces his imminent death (vv.32–42). He is afraid, distressed, agitated; he feels alone; he wants to avoid this hour, in so far as it is possible and continue to do God's will. All these devices draw the readers towards Jesus.

At the same time, they are drawn towards the failing disciples. Although the disciples fail to stay awake, their failure is explained — in terms of their tiredness (vv.37, 40, 41), their regret (v.41b) and, above all, their human weakness (v.38). Because the explanation of weaknesses promotes sympathy, the readers are drawn towards them, recognising how very human all of this is. At one end of the garden a great cosmic drama is occurring, as Jesus struggles in the depths of emotion to face a death that will be the ransom for many, the Passover sacrifice of the new covenant, a death which is a necessity according to God's great unfolding plan and which must happen before the kingdom comes. At the disciples' end of the garden they struggle to stay awake.

Gradually it is becoming clear that only Jesus can face this death, so their failure can be excused. Although the readers are in sympathy with Jesus and feel for him, they

would also recognise their own humanity in that of the disciples. They, too, although longing to be with Jesus, find themselves at the disciples' end of the garden, knowing that their flesh is just as weak.

'The hour', previously expected, now arrives as the betrayer walks into the garden (vv.41f., cf. 13:32). At this point the two plots come together: the opponents are about to get their man; and, in doing so, God's purposes surrounding that man are about to reach resolution.

2.2 Deserted in his Distress (14:43–52)

In the arrest scene (vv.43–52), the tragedy of the betrayal is underlined by Judas being described as 'one of the twelve' and 'the betrayer', and through his use of a token of affection to identify the victim. When the arrest occurs, after an ineffectual show of resistance (v.47), everyone deserts Jesus (v.50). Despite their great resolve to remain loyal, the disciples have failed. But through a subtle allusion to Amos 2:16, Mark ameliorates their failure: even the young man has fled away naked, such is the nature of this great day of distress.

3. Trials Within and Without (14:53–72)

The narrative then provides a moment of pleasant surprise. As the Sanhedrin assembles, Peter appears, still following, albeit at a distance (vv.53f.). For the moment, it looks like his commitment to be there when all others have failed has been realised, although the readers recall Jesus' counter-prediction of what will occur before the night is out. By way of another intercalation, the narrative enables the readers to simultaneously watch the trial of Jesus within and the 'trial' of Peter without. Outside, Jesus' prediction of Peter's fall comes true, but his failure is ameliorated by that prediction, the natural way that he was led into the denial, and his own bitter sorrow when he realised what had occurred, so that the readers remain sympathetic. Inside, Jesus' death is almost taken for granted and the hearing ends in the climactic scene in which Jesus predicts yet again the coming of the Son of Man, who is to be installed at the right hand of power (v.62, cf. Dan 7:13 and Ps 110:1). He had once warned his

opponents against blaspheming by failing to recognise the true source of his authority (3:28f.) and now, as his true identity is climactically revealed, they charge him with blasphemy and his death is assured.

Since Jesus' predictions continue to be fulfilled before the readers' eyes, the expectation is heightened that the outstanding predictions will also be fulfilled. This is reinforced by the repetition of the prediction of the coming of the Son of Man to be installed at the right hand of God (v.62, cf. 8:38–9:1, 13:24–27). The narrative is expecting resurrection to follow his death and the coming of the kingdom of God, in which the Son of Man plays a key role. Here, at the moment of Jesus' greatest vulnerability, he proclaims the Son of Man's ultimate vindication. As they seek to put him to death (vv.55, 64), Jesus is already looking beyond that death to the resurrection and the kingdom of God. As the readers watch the scene outside come to its tragic conclusion — exactly as Jesus predicted —, their expectation is increased that his other predictions too will no doubt occur. The Son of Man will be vindicated and the kingdom of God will arrive in power.

4. The Death Of The King (Mk 15)

The readers know the sequence of expectation and the significance with which Jesus' death has been invested. They must simply await the events to play out according to plan. As they watch, the sense of tragedy deepens as Jesus gradually becomes more and more alone: deserted by friends, he is now deserted by his nation's leaders, by the Roman officials, and eventually by God himself. The readers too, occupying the role of observers, sit at some distance from the events which gives the impression that, they too, in a sense, have deserted him. They are like the women at the end of the account who watch the crucifixion from a distance (v.40).

The hint that there would be a clash with Rome (10:33) now becomes a reality as Pilate and his soldiers enter in force. The Romans showed no sympathy for kingly

pretenders, or even for rival kings who had not been appointed by imperial decree.[2] Pilate's 'trial' condemns him to crucifixion as 'the king of the Jews' — no doubt in great contempt of the nation under his charge.[3] His soldiers mock Jesus as soldiers were prone to do with imperial pretenders.[4] But, in the whole process, and although dripping with tragic irony, it is clear that Mark insists that when Jesus died, he died as a king. The only 'king' in Mark's narrative so far was Herod, whose kingdom led to the death of God's prophet. Now Jesus is put to death by those who had given Herod his power, and when they did so, Mark insists, they killed him as a rival king. Such was the testimony of their own officials (vv.2, 9, 12, 17–20, 26), as well as that of the local elite who retained their privilege by the grace of Rome (v.32) and who here affirm their links with Rome, rather than with Jesus, through assisting in the execution of a rival king.[5]

Given the foregoing narrative, as the local leadership add their mockery to that of the soldiers (vv.29–32), their words contain great irony. They cause the readers to recall the great events that have occurred as Jesus 'saved others'. Since the mockers wish Jesus to save himself from death, their words endorse the point of this thesis that these other 'salvations' were regarded as salvations from death as well. What Jesus has done for them, his mockers now demand that he does for himself.

But the readers are also aware that Jesus has been heading relentlessly for this moment. He had to die, in order to do God's will (cf. 8:35). He was the servant who

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2 Cf. the characterisation of the Jewish kings in Tac. *Hist.* 5.8. Only the Romans had the right to appoint and depose kings in the empire: Mark Antony made Herod King (*BJ* 1.282), whereas the Hasmonean Antigonus forfeited his kingdom because he had been appointed by the Parthians (*AJ* 14.384), and he was executed as a rebel with an axe, after being bound to a stake and flogged, something no Roman appointed king suffered (Dio Cass. 49.22.6; cf. Strabo acc. to Joseph. *AJ* 15.9). Evidently some had short memories. After the death of Herod, without waiting for the Emperor, a certain Simo usurped the title of king. He was punished by Quintilius Varus, the people reduced to obedience, and the kingdom divided among the three sons of Herod (Tac. *Hist.* 5.1–13).

3 Hengel (1976), 61 n.113: 'we cannot overestimate the scandal of a crucified *Jewish* Messiah king who was to be proclaimed "Lord" and "Son of God". Pilate's question (Mark 15:9, 12), and still more the *titulus* on the cross, are expressions of hostility to Judaism.'

4 Cf. The mockery of Vitellius (AD 69) by troops loyal to Vespasian (Dio Cass. 64.20-21); and the Carabas episode in Alexandria, Philo *In Flacc.* 36ff.

5 Mitchell (1993), 113: 'Roman provincial officials and the local populations were bound together by their relations with the emperor.' .

had to suffer (9:35; 10:42–45), the Son of Man whose death would be a ransom for many and which was the necessary preliminary to the arrival of the great resurrection harvest and the kingdom of God. In order to 'save others' he had to die, so he cannot save himself.[6]

Their demand for a final miracle is also ironic. He had given life where there was death. He had brought others 'down from the cross' and now they say that the hard-hearted unbelief they have displayed throughout the story will dissolve if he comes down from the cross right now. They demand the impossible: if he can defeat death, then they will believe. But they clearly believe the opposite: death has defeated him, and their problems are over.

But events around the time of his death could be read as if he had right on his side. As Jesus was dying there was an eclipse for three hours (v.33), which could purportedly be achieved through magic,[7] but was also the kind of sign which accompanied important moments in an emperor's life.[8] Another portent occurs as the temple curtain is torn when he cries out and breathes his last (v.38). Portents were also associated with the death of great emperors (Caesar: Pliny *HN* 2.25.93; Augustus: Suet. 2.97; ghosts had appeared after the death of Caligula, Suet. 4.59). When the Roman centurion saw how Jesus died, he recognised that this man was 'Son of God'. Although possibly another Markan irony, in this title he agrees with the narrator (cf. 1:1) that Jesus has a right to the imperial title. To this man, his death showed that he was a king.

If he was a son of God, then the next item on the agenda could be some kind of apotheosis. However, his manner of death would probably debar him from any such

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6 Tannehill (1980), 80.

7 Hipp. *Morb.Sacr.* 4: 'For if they profess to know how ... to eclipse the sun (ἥλιον ἀφανίζειν).'

8 Wengst, 2. Signs accompany the course of his life: birth, comet at accession and signs at his death 'declare his assumption into the ranks of the gods' (cf. P.Gess I, 3 the emperor is borne aloft in a chariot with white horses). For cosmic Signs, see Friedrich, 724.

hope.[9] Far from receiving apotheosis, those who died violently, such as the crucified, were not even guaranteed a restful death. In the underworld, these people would remain at the edge of the Acheron,[10] and, they would be the ghosts so eagerly sought after by the magicians. Nevertheless, despite the kind of death Jesus died, this representative of Rome declared him to be 'Son of God' — in fact, because of it.

5. The End of The Passion (15:40–16:8)

The final 'sandwich' in Mark's story consists of the introduction of some women, who watch the crucifixion at a distance (vv.40f.); Jesus' burial (vv.42–47); and the discovery of the empty tomb (16:1–8).

1. The Women from Galilee (15:40f.)

Once introduced, this group of named women provide continuity between the three final scenes. They are sympathetic characters, for they have been with Jesus from the beginning in Galilee, and, rather than deserting him at the crucifixion, they watch from a distance.

2. The Burial (15:40–47)

Joseph, a member of the group who put Jesus to death, arranged for Jesus to be buried which he does under the watchful eye of the women. Whether Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus, or simply a pious Jew fulfilling custom by burying fellow Israelites, he 'too' (καί) was awaiting the kingdom of God — as Jesus had been, and as the readers are still. The king has been declared (ch. 15), but, the long-awaited kingdom is yet to appear.

According to the timetable which has been clearly established, Jesus would die and then rise (8:31; 9:31; 10:33f.; 14:27f.); or, in other words, the suffering of the Son

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9 Cf. the Stoic prefect overseeing the martyrdom of Justin (AD 165) who seemed to doubt that one who is scourged and beheaded would ascend to heaven; Whittaker, p. 164.

10 Cf. the underworld journey in which a man sits at the shores of ugliness and 'stretched around there lay a vast plain, full of corpses of dreadful doom, beheaded or crucified. Above the ground stood pitiable bodies, their throats but lately cut. Others, again, impaled, hung like the trophies of a cruel destiny. The Furies, crowned with wreaths, were laughing at the miserable manner of the corpses' death' (Page94.12ff. [2nd AD]).

of Man would precede his coming / the kingdom (8:31, 38, 9:1; 9:9–13; 13:24–27, 29; 14:24f.; 14:62). By carefully indicating predictions and fulfilments, the passion narrative has reinforced the expectation that Jesus' major predictions will also come true. In the death of the 'king', the suffering of the Son of Man has occurred. The next item on the agenda is his resurrection/vindication, when he will come to the throne of God and receive the kingdom. So where is the kingdom?

3. The Empty Tomb (16:1–8)

3.1 The Discovery

In the early morning, the women discovered an empty tomb (vv.1–4, 6). The messenger who alarmed them with his presence (v.5), informed them that the crucified one has risen, as predicted. He stressed that the tomb was now empty (v.6) and instructed them to inform the disciples that Jesus will meet them in Galilee, as he had promised (14:28). Instead of doing so, the women did the opposite: they went out and fled, saying nothing to anyone. Mark explains this as being due to their fear (v.8).[11] Thus the closing sentence of the Gospel leaves the readers with women who are silent about Jesus' resurrection, because they are afraid.

3.2 The Impact

3.2.1 Time for a Proper Burial

The women went to the tomb to provide Jesus with a proper burial, doing so at exactly the day and time specified by ancient Greek law (cf. Solon's law, in Dem 43.62). Unlike John's disciples (6:29), Jesus' disciples had deserted him which meant that he was buried by a stranger from the council which condemned him. The women sought to rectify this situation.

The readers, however, are also aware that Jesus had predicted that on the same day the ἐκφορά should take place, the Son of Man would rise from the dead (8:31; 9:31; 10:34). Since it is now the third day, the discovery of the empty tomb speaks

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11 I assume that 16:8 was the original and intended ending which provides a complete and fitting conclusion to Mark's narrative enterprise.

loudly of yet another prediction being fulfilled, even before the young man confirms that this is what has happened (v.6).

3.2.2 A Lost Body

Some have suggested that the disappearance of the body should be read as a signal that Jesus has either become a Hero, or has been translated.[12] Although at this point it is only possible to summarise the evidence, I have argued elsewhere that Mark's account fits neither of these options.[13]

2.2.1 A Hero?

The 'empty tomb' does not signal that this is the story of a Hero. The Hero cult required the body of the Hero to be in the grave, for his power was localised around that site. Occasionally 'empty graves' were used, but this was in the cases where the Hero was known to have died elsewhere, making his body inaccessible. Since the body was necessary for the Hero cult, the empty tombs were erected to do service for the cult as if the body were there.[14] Whereas these 'empty tombs' were genuine Cenotaphs (κενοὶ τάφοι), Mark's narrative stresses that Jesus' body used to be there, but it has now gone from the tomb; i.e. it is an empt-*ied* tomb. Far from his post-death presence being localised at the grave-site, as was the case for a Hero, Jesus had promised that he would meet his disciples in Galilee.

This is not a story of Jesus' inauguration as a Hero.[15]

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12 Bickermann (1924); Hamilton; Yarbro Collins (1992a; 1995).

13 Bolt (1996b).

14 Thucydides (2.34.3) reports a similar practice: during the ἐκφορά for those who had fallen in war, the Athenians 'carried one empty bier for the missing whose bodies could not be found for burial'.

15 It seems odd to argue that 'the focus on the tomb in Mark may have been inspired by the importance of the graves of the heroes in the Greco-Roman world. Even if the location of the tomb of Jesus was unknown to the author of Mark, and even if there were no cultic observances at the site of the tomb, it would still be important as a *literary* motif in characterising Jesus as hero-like.' If it is a *literary* motif, then why is there nothing in Mark's account to suggest a Hero cult, and, in fact, features which deny it? In terms of actuality, if the tomb was unknown, and if there was no cult, then there is nothing to indicate Jesus was a Hero here either. It was the cult given at a tomb that made a Hero a Hero!

(Yarbro Collins 1995, 93)

2.2.2 A Translation?

Is it instead a translation story?[16] The stories of people who disappeared, translated to another location, be it to on or under the earth, or to heaven, did not usually give them a tomb — let alone an empty one —, because a translation avoided death altogether.[17] The occasional exceptions which seem to be translations from out of a 'tomb', are, on closer examination, simply variants on the same theme.[18] To be translated was to avoid death altogether, or, in the case of Alkmene, at least to avoid being buried and going into the underworld (Plut. *Rom.* 28.6–8).

Once again, these stories do not compare favourably with Mark: Jesus very definitely dies, in fact, he is crucified; he is buried; and the supposed 'translation' occurs far too late, after he has presumably been in the underworld for three days.

The other problem with the proposal that Mark was using translation as a literary motif, is that, by the first century, these translation stories were a thing of the mythological past based upon a psychology that had been largely superseded. Where they were utilised, as in the rhetoric surrounding the apotheosis of the emperors, it was in a modified form which no longer required a bodily translation.

2.3 A Risen Body

The young man did not announce Jesus had become a Hero; nor that he had been translated; still less an aberrant mixture of the two;[19] but that 'he is risen' (ἠγέρθη).[20] What would this mean for Mark's Greco-Roman readers?

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16 Yarbro Collins (1995), 88.

17 Bolt (1996b), 34.

18 Bolt (1996b), 35–37.

19 The hero was distinguished from those who have been translated; see Rohde, 121; Bolt (1996b), 34–36.

20 This is not the language of translation, as even Bickermann (1924), 286, admitted. Narratives used a range of language to refer to translations, e.g. the notion of disappearing, or becoming invisible, (ἀφανιζ-) is frequent; if divinisation was involved, the ἀποθεωσ- or ἐκθειωσ- groups can be used; phrases expressing the changed location also occur ('from amongst men'/ 'to amongst the gods').

2.3.1 Real Bodies; Insubstantial Shades

The translation stories assumed an older view of the nature of human life. In Homeric tradition, real life was bodily life, and the afterlife could not properly be called 'life'.[21] Normally, at death the 'soul' flitted away from the body as its sinews were no longer able to hold the flesh and bones together (*Od.* 11.218ff.; cf. *Il.* 23.97ff.), and went to the afterlife as a shadow, not a body (cf. *Il.* 1.3–5; *Od.* 11).[22] When the privileged few were granted immortality in the myths — being translated to immortality,[23] or to a special region on the edge of the world (the Elysian fields,[24] or Okeanos;[25] or the Isles of the Blessed[26]), or even to subterranean regions, separate from Hades[27] — because they had avoided death altogether, their immortality was in the body.[28]

2.3.2 Soul to Heavens; Body to the Earth

Between Homer and Plato this conception changed: the soul was derived from the upper world, and it was set in opposition to the body.[29] Orphism linked the soul and the air, for it came from τὸ ὅλον and was borne by the winds and entered whilst breathing (Arist. *De anima* 410^{b}28). At death, the soul abides in the air, but the bodies

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21 Rohde, 4, 9.

22 Riley, 29.

23 Kalypso wishes to do so for Odysseus (*Od* 5.135f.; 209f; 23.335f). Odysseus is rescued from the sea by Ino Leukothea who used to be mortal (*Od* 5.333ff) — had she been carried away by a god (cf. *Od* 6.280f)? Ganymede was similarly carried off (*Il* 20.232ff). Eos bore off the beautiful Orion (*Od* 5.122ff; cf. the story of Kleitos, 15.249f).

24 Menelaus is informed of the Elysian plain, where Rhadamanthys already dwells (*Od.* 4.560ff.).

25 To where Penelope wishes to be transported, *Od* 20.61–65; 79ff.

26 The realm of Hesiod's fourth race, the Heroes (*Op.* 170ff.).

27 Rohde, Ch. III, mentions Amphiaraos; Trophonios; Kaineus; Althaimenes; Amphilochos; Laodike; Aristaios. Erechtheus, Hyakinthos, and Asklepios are examples of ancient gods living beneath the earth, whose subterranean dwelling becomes the 'grave' of their later Hero worship.

28 The post-Homeric poems increased the number of translations: in the Kypria Artemis immortalises Iphigeneia in the land of the Taurians; the Aithiopis has Eos giving immortality to Memnon, who had been killed by Achilles (rather than the Iliad story which had Sleep and Death bear off the body of Sarpedon to his own country for burial) and Thetis carrying the body of Achilles from the funeral pyre and bring him to Leuke (contrast *Od* 24.47ff); in the Telegoneia, Odysseus is made immortal after being slain by Kirke, and they dwell over the sea.

29 Riley, 29.

return to the earth, an idea which reverberates through literature and inscription (e.g. Eur. *Supp.* 531–536; *IG* I,2 945.6; *CIL* 3.6384; Peek, GG**353**, 2ff. [1st/2nd AD]; Jub. 23.22; Sen. *ad Helv.*11.7; Philostr. *VitAp* 8.31)

With such ideas on the fate of the body at death, how would Greco-Roman readers have heard the story of the empty tomb?

2.3.3 Apotheosis of Virtuous Souls

It had long been believed that the virtuous person's death was somehow different to that of others. 'By the quality of their lives, such outstanding individuals have overcome death itself.'[30] We have already seen the Pythagorean notion that the soul is released from the body on death, and, depending on its state of purgation, it is either reincarnated, or, if pure, it soars aloft, back to the divine (Chapter 3, Suppliant #1). It is a small step to the idea that a man of great virtue would join the gods in some special kind of sense (cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.17; Sir 45:4–5 [Moses]).[31]

Unlike the older translations, apotheosis involved not the body, but only the soul. The funeral pyre was said to burn away the body so that the immortal part could ascend to the gods (Apollod. 2.7.7; Lucian *Herm.* 7; cf. *Pereg.* 4, 6, 30, cf. 33; *AG* 16.185). Heaven was the domain of souls, not bodies — which the virtuous man had spent his lifetime seeking to overcome.

This view of apotheosis rewarding virtue lay behind the Imperial apotheoses.

2.3.4 Apotheosis of the Emperor

As we have seen, Mark was launched upon an empire still in transition with regard to the apotheosis of its emperors. The Romulus mythology had been pressed into its service, but, the prevailing psychology meant that this was not bodily. When apotheosis became standard, the funeral ritual symbolised the heavenly ascent of the soul by releasing an eagle from a cage on top of the pyre (Dio 35.4; Hdn 4.2; cf. Lucian *Pereg.* 39). But down below, their body was still burning.

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30 Parker, 43, citing literature.

31 Cf. Hengel (1976), 25 n.54, on Herakles' apotheosis.

2.3.5 Bodily?

As we have seen, the idea of a temporary restoration to bodily life was not completely foreign to the Greco-Roman, and some, such as Plutarch, had even heard of certain Oriental views on a more lasting future resurrection (Plut. *De I et O* 370C).

But, given his Platonic views of soul and body, such views had to be labelled fabulous, for it is simply 'against nature' to insist that the body had a role in the afterlife. Even the mythological bodily translations were abhorrent (*Rom.* 28.4), 'improbably ascrib[ing] divinity to the mortal features in human nature, as well as to the divine' (6). Although he does not want to reject divinity arising from virtue, he is nonetheless adamant that 'to mix heaven with earth is foolish' (οὐρανῷ μιγνύειν γῆν ἀβέλτερον). The soul separates from the body, so that it 'becomes altogether pure, fleshless (ἄσαρκον)',

> We must, therefore, definitely not against nature send the bodies of good people up together into heaven (οὐδὲν οὖν δεῖ τὰ σώματα τῶν ἀγαθῶν συναναπέμπειν παρὰ φύσιν εἰς ουρανόν), but implicitly believe that in accordance with nature their virtues and their souls, and divine justice, ascend from men to heroes, from heroes to demi-gods, and from demi-gods, after they have been made pure and holy, as in the final rites of initiation and have freed themselves from mortality and sense, to gods, not by civic law, but in very truth and according to right reason, thus achieving the fairest and most blessed consummation.
>
> (Plut. *Rom.* 28.7–8)

The phrase 'by civic law' (νόμῳ πόλεως) may be directed at the Roman practice of divinising emperors by Senatorial decision. Plutarch's Pythagoreanism taught that all good souls will achieve this end, not by public law but by the practice of virtue. But, even with that quibble aside, he clearly considers a bodily apotheosis to be completely misguided, for 'to send bodies to heaven' is completely 'against nature'.[32]

Despite these views, Mark's concluding chapter presents an emptied tomb and an announcement that the 'body' which once lay in it 'is risen'.

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32 Cf. Celsus' vehement attacks against the doctrine of *bodily* resurrection, *c.Cels.* 5.14–15, e.g.: 'The soul may have everlasting life, but corpses, as Heraclitus said "ought to be thrown away as worse than dung"; 2.55, 'But we must examine the question whether anyone who really died ever rose again with the same body.'

2.3.6 The Crucified One is Risen

In what would be seen as a great paradox, the young man closely connected the risen one with the crucified one (v.6). To be crucified was such an horrendous death, that it generally signalled that the person was under a curse. Such people did not gain rest in the underworld, and they were therefore the kind of ghosts that the magicians loved to use (βιαιοθάνατοι). On the other hand, any kind of removal from death was connected with a person's great virtue. If the apotheosis of Claudius was questioned partly because his lame foot showed him to be under the wrath of heaven (Sen. *Apoc.* 11, cf. 1), how would a crucified man ever be amongst the likely candidates for an apotheosis? He would be departing to dwell restlessly on the shores of Acheron, not amongst the gods.

But Mark's story has already insisted upon the fact that Jesus had to die and to die in this horrendous way. The portrayal of the scene on the mount of transfiguration, suggested that Jesus refused the opportunity for an apotheosis. That was the moment when it should have occurred and yet he did not disappear, but came back down the mountain, for 'the Son of Man must suffer'. There would be no resurrection and no glorious kingdom of God without his prior suffering. From then on the narrative pressed relentlessly forward to his inevitable death. But now that he has suffered and died, resurrection has occurred: he is risen.

He was not a Hero who died and from the underworld managed to make his presence still felt in the upper world. Nor was he translated, as one of the privileged few who avoided death altogether. Nor did he receive an apotheosis of soul, as some kind of reward above and beyond the rest of humanity, because of his own great virtue. Jesus' body was in the tomb, then it was no longer there, for 'he is risen'. This is clearly a resurrection, where a body — in fact, a crucified body — returns to life from the grave.

2.4 The Resurrection of the Son of Man

2.4.1 Crucified

Jesus rose as the one who had been crucified. He had died a political death, crushed by those in power who refused to recognise his identity as Christ, Son of God. Ultimately, his death was because his leadership claims set him up as a king rivalling the emperors. Unlike them, his leadership really did bring life where there was death, and this desire to bring life was a precipitating cause of his own death (3:5f.). But from Mark's point of view, he was crucified as part of the divine plan. He had saved others from the shadow of death, but, if he was to save others from death itself and bring them into the life of the kingdom, then he could not save himself. His death was the means by which others were ransomed from the grave.

2.4.2 Risen

His resurrection was therefore more than his own personal vindication. It was not a reward for his own moral virtues, which is then held out as a model to which Mark's readers can aspire. This would be to treat his resurrection as if it were an apotheosis on the imperial model. He had become so immersed in the pain and suffering of humanity that he was crushed by it himself. When he rose, his resurrected crucified body speaks of a hope for those similarly crushed by the various forces of death in the world. But, it would be a misunderstanding of the event to interpret in some kind of moralistic framework, as a hope held out to people in similar circumstances to those of Jesus, if they appropriately follow in his steps. Mark's suppliant stories have depicted a world filled with people in great need, who are all, in one way or another, victims of death and under its dark shadow. Not one of them had the resources simply to follow a perfect exemplar. They did not need an example, they needed to be rescued, which is exactly what Jesus did for them. To be saved, they needed to take what he had to give.

His actions on their behalf provide a picture of the larger theme of entering the kingdom. The narrative has stressed the impossibility of entering the kingdom through human means, but that it is achieved by God making the impossible possible. In the flow of the story, he does this by providing the ransoming death of the Son of Man.

Entering the kingdom is not a matter of following an example, but of receiving what Jesus has to give.

When he rises from the dead, he does so as the Son of Man, who does not act on his own behalf, but on the behalf of others. Jesus' resurrection is not only the defeat of death for himself, but it is also the defeat of death for others.

2.4.3 The Kingdom in Power

In Jesus' victory over death the kingdom of God comes with power — at least in his case. But according to Daniel 7, when the Son of Man received the kingdom, it would flow over to the rest of the saints. If Jesus has now risen and received the promised kingdom, then this holds hope for others. As the one who acted on behalf of the many, his victory was also victory for the many and he will share the kingdom with them.

But what kind of people were these 'many'? Mark's Gospel has already shown the kind of people these are: they are people like the suppliants, the crowds, the children, yes and even the lapsed disciples. People in all kinds of very real, and very tragic, situations so much a part of the first-century world. Apotheosis of the soul held promise only for an elite. Those who were not amongst the great ones in terms of their achievements or their morality would have little hope. If they had some bodily disability, their chances were perhaps even more remote — see, for example, as one of the items mocking the apotheosis of Claudius, who was lame in this right foot, in Seneca's satire has say: 'Look at his body, born under the wrath of heaven' (*Apoc.* 11, cf. 1). But, on the other hand, 'resurrection' was filled with promise to all those in a broken world who could not raise themselves from the dust and whose virtue could not save them. They had a champion who had gone ahead of them and, in going ahead of them, he had provided a ransom which guaranteed their future.

For Mark's readers, the 'kingdoms of the beasts' (Dan 7:1–12) was harsh reality, for the ability of human power to wreak havoc and to kill was painfully obvious. They also knew what it was like when unseen forces caused so much pain and suffering, before suddenly taking life away. Human mortality was a painful reality and the

shadow of death hung heavily across the nations. Mark's Gospel spoke of a coming kingdom, which was life, not death; salvation, not corruption; and for those who continued to live under the shadow of death, Mark presented the assurance that something had been done about human mortality: a crucified man had defeated death.

Chapter 8: Conclusions
Mark's Impact on
Early Readers

1. Conclusions on Method

This thesis has adopted a reader-oriented method, but has attempted to move beyond the textual construct known as the implied reader to examine the potential impact of the Gospel on real flesh-and-blood readers. The examination of the interface between the ancient text and the ancient reader utilised the combination of a reader-oriented literary analysis and a type of social description closely linked to Mark's vocabulary. The analysis of the text from two directions (text to implied reader; flesh-and-blood reader to text) proved to be a useful way of approaching the ancient reading experience in order to examine the potential impact of Mark upon its early readers.

In particular, the thesis focused upon the role of the thirteen suppliants in the creation of Mark's narrative impact. The analysis of the axis 'text to implied reader', paying close attention to focalisation and the dynamics of distance, showed that the narrative creates strong identification between these characters and the readers. In addition, it was noted that the suppliants are not presented merely as types, subordinated to a plot deemed more important. Instead, through the often quite detailed presentation of their situations of need, i.e. their physical and social circumstances, the narrative presents them as person-like characters whom real readers could recognise as approximations of people known to them from their real world. If the arguments of this thesis are accepted, future discussions of Mark's narrative dynamics will have to give greater attention to these characters, and the previous functionalist framework within which the discussion has been conducted will have to be rejected in favour of one allowing greater complexity. Since the text presents these characters as person-like and creates strong identification with them, the suppliants form a natural contact-point between the text and the real world. The early flesh-and-blood readers would see the

suppliants not as role-models whom they ought to emulate, but as people like themselves living in a world with great problems.

The analysis of the axis '(flesh-and-blood) reader to text' attempted to recover the assumptions which early Greco-Roman readers would have in regard to the suppliants' various problems. Here the starting point was the vocabulary used by Mark to describe the suppliants' problems, or closely related vocabulary and concepts, although the direction in which the discussion moved varied with the particular condition. A special feature of the thesis has been the discussion of material of relevance to the various conditions in Mark drawn from the magical sources. By this means, it was discovered that these conditions would have been regarded far more seriously in the first century than in the late twentieth.

Without a doubt more research could be done along these lines. This thesis has by no means exhausted the relevant material in the ancient sources. More could still be done to recover ancient understandings of these illnesses and their social effects, and the understanding(s) of the body and disease as taught by the philosophers and as assumed by medical practice. Although the discussion of Mark's illnesses has not been exhaustive, it has vindicated the method. The recovery of ancient perceptions of the illnesses represented in Mark's suppliant stories has enhanced the understanding of the potential impact of these stories on early readers. The thesis has argued that each illness was a serious condition closely linked to death.

Similar points could be made concerning the comparative use of the magical material. As the renaissance of the study of magic continues and more information comes to light, further research into magical viewpoints and practices could be profitably done in the attempt to enhance the understanding of the early impact of Mark's suppliant stories. Further attention to questions of the development (or otherwise) of magical thinking and practice, and of the use for first century comparative purposes of material from other time periods, is bound to offer fruitful insights into Mark's potential impact on early readers. Closer attention to geographical distinctives in the magical material may also prove useful, despite the fact that Mark's geographical

provenance will probably continue to be a matter of some debate. But once again, despite the fact that more could be done, the comparative work in this thesis has achieved at least two key results. It has been argued that in Mark's world *daimons* were linked with the dead, and that each of the conditions suffered by the suppliants could have drawn the suspicion that it had a magical cause. The stronger the suspicion, the more the suppliant would be seen to be under the sway of the dead.

2. Jesus' Defeat of Death

The result of the inquiry for understanding Mark's narrative has been to suggest that each of the suppliants in Mark lived under the shadow of death. Albeit with varying degrees of certainty, it has been argued that each condition represented in the healing and exorcism scenes brought them close to death itself and/or under the sway of the dead. As such, each of the thirteen suppliant stories relates to Jesus' defeat of death. Jesus dealt with the spirits of the dead (Suppliants #1, 6, 9, 12). He cured people from death-dealing disease (Suppliants #2, ?9, 12) and from illnesses which made a person almost dead — since they attacked crucial bodily structures (Suppliant #4, 5, 12). He rescued others from being numbered amongst the living dead (Suppliants #3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13), from being 'metaphorically dead' (Suppliant #5), from the point of death (Suppliant #7a), and, even better, from death itself (Suppliant #7b). Thus, when read from this reconstructed perspective, the healing/exorcism scenes show Jesus dealing with death on two fronts: he rescued people from the power of death and from the power of the dead. This study has therefore endorsed the conclusion that, in Mark, Jesus' 'overarching opponent is death itself'.[1]

It also endorses the opinion that the scenes involving the suppliants contain the message of the Gospel in microcosm.[2] By showing Jesus defeating death in some

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1 Wegener, 78.

2 Robinson, 87–88, on 5:1–20 and 9:14–29, compared the victory over death and violence in the exorcisms to the victory over death in Jesus' resurrection (cf. Nineham, 243 n.†). 'In the exorcisms, Jesus is struggling for life and communion on behalf of the possessed person. Both of these characteristics of a true historical existence had been opposed by the demon,' (p.90). Wilder, 37, also spoke of the healing and exorcisms stories as the dramatisation of the Gospel story.

form, the suppliants provide entry-points to Mark's larger narrative which presents the same message: Jesus died in order to bring in the (general) resurrection of the dead and the kingdom of God.

3. Jesus' Defeat of Death and Mark's Early Readers

From the beginning of the Gospel, Jesus' story is set within the framework of the expectation of the coming of the kingdom of God. The narrative presents him as an alternative leader to those in power in the first century world, and it heads relentlessly towards his crucifixion when he is loudly proclaimed to be king. The narrative presented his death as a divine necessity, for he had to die before the resurrection and the kingdom of God would arrive. Refusing to avoid death through apotheosis, Jesus willingly embraced this difficult necessity. When he died, he was recognised as Son of God, but he did not undergo an apotheosis of soul as the great emperors had done. Mark's final chapter shows that he was raised bodily from the dead.

Jesus, despite being crucified, had defeated death. This was not simply an act of virtue on his own behalf, but, according to the expectations erected by the narrative, his death was the ransom which was God's means of guaranteeing entry to the kingdom of God for the many, for whom it would be impossible to enter any other way. Thus, Jesus' resurrection holds hope for others. This hope was not just for the virtuous, or for the bodily whole, but it was for all who cared to take up his invitation to follow him. It was more difficult for the great ones of the world to respond than it was for those regarded as least. The suppliants were concrete illustrations of this message. They came in all their brokenness and were brought from the shadow of death into life. They were paradigmatic for any who recognised their own mortality and their need to plead for mercy to someone who could do something about this problem. Any who knew what it was like to live under the shadow of death could draw hope from Jesus' action on their behalf. With Bartimaeus, they could hear Jesus' call to follow, being prepared to die for his sake and the gospel's in order to rise again in the resurrection.

For Mark presents Jesus as more than simply a role model whose example is relevant even when facing death. Jesus is presented as the one who defeated death,

both in his ministry to the suppliants and ultimately through his own death and resurrection. Living in a world so keenly aware of human mortality, Mark's readers would know what it meant to cry, 'Do you not care that we are perishing?'. Once they had been engaged by Mark's Gospel, they would also know the answer to this question: Jesus cared enough to die, so that others might live. To save others, he did not even save himself. He cared for those who are perishing and opened the way into the kingdom of God.

Mark's Gospel sought to provide the foundation of the gospel message that was being proclaimed to the first-century world by the movement which arose in the wake of the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth. It proclaimed Jesus in terms familiar to that world from the imperial rhetoric. The imperial cult was an instrument which structured the reality of the empire and which imposed a definition of the world and its relationship to the emperor. Mark's narrative also attempted to structure reality, but through an alternate definition of the world and in relationship to God, not Caesar. The ultimate future concerned the coming kingdom of God, not the future of Rome. The Son of God who was the source of life for a world on the brink of destruction was not Caesar, but Jesus of Nazareth. His leadership was not established through military muscle and it left no trail of blood, but, instead, it brought life where there was already death. To those who experienced the empire 'from below', his leadership offered an alternate 'beginning of good news' by bringing the hope of resurrection. Daily life was lived under the shadow of death, but, by dying, this Son of God had cared for those who were perishing. He had defeated death.

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1. PRIMARY SOURCES

1.1 Computer Resources

I have made use of the TLG and PHI data bases on CD Rom, using the IBYCUS computer at Tyndale House Centre for Biblical Research, Cambridge. Where a source has been accessed solely by this means, it is marked [TLG].

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THE SPIRIT IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS:

THE EQUIPMENT OF THE SERVANT

Peter Bolt

Synopsis

Following the current trend which takes seriously the fact that the Gospels are narratives, this paper explores the Spirit's role in the Synoptic Gospels.

It is observed that each Gospel associates the Spirit with the commissioning of Jesus, which provides the narrative explanation of the Spirit's role. The Spirit comes upon the Son of God at his baptism, equipping him for the role he will play in the subsequent narrative. The explicit OT quotations relating to the heavenly voice define his messianic role in terms of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord.

An attempt is then made to read the remaining references to the Spirit in each Gospel against this explanation. In some cases this understanding clarifies some previously difficult texts. In other cases it is suggestive, but no doubt needs more careful explanation. This reading of the Spirit's narrative role has significant implications for the understanding of Jesus and of the kingdom, as explained in the final section of the paper.

Exploring the Spirit in the Gospel Narratives

This exploration seeks to apply the emphasis on literary analysis current in Gospel studies[1] to the Spirit motif in the

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1 For this trend see S.D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: the theoretical challenge* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1989).

Synoptics by doing two things: (1) Identifying how the role of the Holy Spirit is *explained* by the text of the Gospels and (2) Exploring whether the remaining references to the Spirit can be read against this textual explanation.

The Spirit and Mark.

The Spirit and the Servant

The early sections of a narrative set up the parameters by which the ensuing story is to be read, educating the reader to read the story correctly. These early sections introduce the major characters of the story and "commission" them, that is, assign them the role which they will attempt to fulfil by the end of the story (whether they succeed or not depends on the type of story).

Most of Mark's references to the Spirit occur at the beginning and the end of his "commissioning" chapters (chs 1-3), first in the prologue (in John the Baptist's prophecy, Jesus' baptism, and Jesus' temptation, 1:1-13) and then in the Beelzebub controversy (3:20-35). The first appearances of the Holy Spirit are therefore in a significant section of the Gospel.

The prologue

John the Baptist's prophecy (1:7-8) tells of the coming one who will baptise ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ("in the Holy Spirit"). The future tense ("he will baptise") generates an expectation of fulfilment which, at least in the first instance, can be expected from within the story itself.

It is commonly thought that John's prophecy refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit imparted to Christian believers, whether in Christian baptism or Spirit baptism.[2] However,

2 For the various options see B.M.F. van Iersel, "He will baptize you with Holy Spirit, Mk 1:8. The time perspective of *baptisei* ", *Text & Testimony: Essays in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn* (T. Baarda and others, eds; Kampen: Kok, 1988), 132-141.

consistent with similar phrases in Mark, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ could also mean "by the authority of the Holy Spirit",[3] and refer not to *gift* but to *means*.[4] In this case the focus is not on the Spirit, but on the baptising that the coming one will do by the Spirit's authority. This interpretation moves smoothly into the baptism story in which Jesus is endowed with the Spirit, and so can properly be described as acting ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ("in/by the Holy Spirit").

John expects a coming Stronger One who, endowed with the Holy Spirit, will baptise. Verse 8 reveals that he will baptise the same group of people as were baptised by John. Since this group has already been identified in verse 5, it is clear that when the Stronger One comes he will baptise "the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem", that is, the people of Israel .[5]

In the baptism story (vv. 9-11) the Spirit descends upon Jesus, identifying him as the Stronger One. However, the real focus of the account is upon the voice from heaven which gives the authoritative explanation of the baptismal events in terms of the allusions to Psalm 2:7, and Isaiah 42:1. The messianic Psalm 2, while talking of the Anointed One, contains no specific reference to the Spirit. On the other hand, Isaiah 42:1 is a messianic passage that explicitly mentions the bestowal of the Spirit. This factor, plus the patent Isaianic flavour of Mark's prologue (v.2, cf. Isa 40:3; v.7, cf. Isa 49:25, 53:12), makes it clear that the Isaiah allusion is the significant one. At the Jordan, Jesus is endowed with the Spirit as the Son (Messiah). However, his Sonship is to be understood in terms of Isaiah's Servant: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring justice to the nations" (Isa 42:1).

3 Compare 3:22, 30; 11:28, 30 cf. 33 and 12:1-12. See also 6:2.

4 J.E.Yates, "The Form of Mark 1.8b: 'I baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'" *NTS* 4/4 (1958), 334-338.

5 W.J. Dumbrell, "The Content of the Gospel and Implications for Christian Community", *RTR* 40/2 (1981), 33f.; Van Iersel, in "Time Perspective", points out that this fact alone devastates most mooted fulfilments of the Baptist's prophecy.

The coming of the Spirit is therefore not simply *described*, but *explained*. From this moment on, the Spirit theme cannot be understood as Jesus' "empowerment and inspiration" in general, for the text has offered a specific explanation of what he is empowered and inspired *as*. The Spirit comes upon Jesus and thereby authorises and equips him as the Servant of the Lord. Of course, the text is at liberty to modify this explanation if it likes, but until there are clear textual indicators that such a modification is required, this explanation will naturally guide the reading of subsequent references to the Spirit.

Although the temptation scene (vv. 12-13) has more connotations than simply those aroused by the Servant, we should note that the desert is the appropriate place for the Spirit to take the Servant, since Isaiah presented his ministry to Jerusalem as "a new exodus ... a new march on the promised land from the wilderness...".[6]

The Beelzebub controversy (3:22-30)

At the end of the commissioning chapters, Jesus openly clashes with his opponents (3:22-30). He finishes by warning the Jerusalem leaders (v.22) about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (v.29). It is clear from Mark's explanation (v.30), that this consists of radically misreading Jesus' source of authority. This much is generally recognised.

However, from the prologue we know that the Holy Spirit's role is associated with Jesus as Servant. This then explains Jesus' choice of the riddle of the strong man (v.27; cf. Isa 49:25; Isa 53:12; Mark 1:7). It also explains the threat of no forgiveness (v.29). The Jerusalemites had gone out to John hoping to find forgiveness (1:4-5),[7] and he had promised them the Stronger One who would baptise Jerusalem. Once the

6 W. J. Dumbrell, "The Role of the Servant in Isaiah 40-55", *RTR* 48/3 (1989), 106.

7 Rather than bestowing forgiveness, John's baptism of repentance prepared for the coming of forgiveness (*εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, "with a view to forgiveness").

Servant has arrived, if Jerusalem fails to recognise his ministry, then they will miss out on the forgiveness he brings. The blasphemy against the Spirit is the failure to receive Jesus as the long awaited Servant-Messiah.

On either side of the Beelzebub incident, we find the story of Jesus' family seeking to contain his "madness" by taking him home. They too have failed to recognise that the Spirit has "come upon him", and their desire to take him home is a potential reversal of his Servant vocation. Nevertheless, Jesus remains the faithful Servant, choosing to remain amongst those who seek to do God's will (v. 35).

Thus the commissioning chapters plainly associate the Spirit with Jesus. The Spirit designates Jesus the Servant-Son who has a mission towards Jerusalem. This is a divine mission. So to attribute it to Satan, or to madness, is to risk speaking against God and his purposes. The Servant's ministry can be opposed only at the peril of missing out on the forgiveness he brings, and so being left with eternal sin. The implicit recommended option is to be associated with him in his mission, that is, to do the will of God.[8] However, the commissioning chapters close with the expectation of his baptising activity (by now clearly linked to forgiveness) still outstanding.

The Coming Baptism (10:38-39)

In the middle chapters of Mark, Jesus exercises the role of the Servant, in the context of a blind, hard-hearted Israel (Mark 4:12; 7:1-23; 10:5a; cf. Isa 6:9,10; 29:13; 42:18ff). His disciples hover between following the Servant in doing God's will, and continuing to share in Israel's blindness (4:24, 40; 7:18; 8:14-21). The climax of this section is the explanation of the Servant's coming death in terms of Isaiah 53, the famous ransom saying (10:45).

8 The study of what it means to do God's will in Mark increases the connection with the Servant, for it means (for Jesus) to go to the cross and suffer for many. See J.R. Donahue, "A Neglected Factor in the Theology of Mark", *JBL* 101/4 (1982), 563-594.

In this climactic Servant context, Jesus finally speaks of the baptism which John had promised he would perform (10:38-39), combining it with the image of drinking "the cup" of God's wrath destined for Jerusalem (another allusion to Isaiah's Servant context; cf. Isa 51:17ff). In Mark 10:35-45 both images are plainly associated with the Servant's death as a ransom for many. The cup image sustains the link, through the last Supper and Gethsemane, to the crucifixion (14:23-5, 36). In this way, the expectation generated by John's prophecy finds its narrative fulfilment in Jesus' death. It seems that the baptism of Jerusalem, by the authority of the Spirit, will be when Jesus dies as a ransom for many.

The Spirit and the disciples?

There are two places where the Spirit appears to be associated, not with Jesus as the Servant, but with the disciples. I will suggest that it is possible that both these references can be read against the earlier explanation which associates the Spirit with the Servant.

The Spirit is the speaker (13:11)

In the "apocalyptic discourse" of chapter 13, Jesus prepares his disciples for the opposition and conflict that will be a part of their future. In this setting they are promised the help of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 11 of this chapter is usually interpreted as a promise that the disciples will receive illumination from the Holy Spirit at the time of their need, supplying the words needed for their witness or defence. But if so, it is a new departure for the narrative, which has so far linked the Holy Spirit only to Jesus as the Servant. There is no new explanation offered to signal such a departure and, although this interpretation may well make sense to a post-resurrection perspective, it is difficult to see what the disciples would have made of it at the time when they first

heard Jesus' words.[9]

This explanation appears to construe the phrase *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ* ("in that hour") as a part of the preceding subjunctive clause *ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν* ("whatever is given to you"), which is then taken in a future sense. However, the text has an ambiguity that calls for careful reflection. It is possible to construe *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ* ("in that hour") not with what goes before, but with the following imperative: "in that hour, say this..." There are several advantages to this reading:

a. It allows the phrase *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ* ("in that hour") to be taken with a following verb, as in the numerous OT prophetic predictions introduced by "In that day ..." This language fits extremely well into the apocalyptic context of Mark 13.[10]
b. It yields a nicely balanced structure, consisting of a time reference and an imperative on both sides of the *ἀλλά* ("But") which introduces the pivotal line of the saying, namely, *ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν* ("whatever might be given to you"). This balanced section is then followed by an explanatory clause:

καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες,	and whenever they lead you, arresting,
μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε τί λαλήσητε	Don't worry what you might say
ἀλλ' ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν,	But whatever might be given to you
ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦτο λαλεῖτε	In that hour This, keep saying.
οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑμεῖς οἱ λαλοῦντες	For you are not the ones speaking
ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον	But the Holy Spirit

9 Although John 2:22 shows that this is not an insurmountable problem.

10 v. 24; also cf. v. 21, 26. The prophetic examples are too numerous to list, but see, e.g. Isa 2:20; 3:18; 4:2; 7:20, 21, 23; 10:20 etc; also in Jer, Ezk, Hos, Joel, Zec 12-14, Amos, Obad, Mic.

c. It would make better sense to the first hearers. A promise of post-resurrection spiritual insight would make little sense to the disciples in the original situation. But a reminder to say "whatever you have been given" is an appropriate encouragement, assuring them that they will be adequately prepared for the trying times of which Jesus is speaking.

The question is, what is it they are to say? Any first hearer of this saying would not immediately think of illumination on the spot, but would more naturally expect that the preparation would be done before the hour of need. In the story so far, the disciples have already been given what basically amounts to the gospel (1:16ff; 3:14; 4:11; 6:7-13; cf. 13:10). The content of this gospel is defined by 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is near."

d. It allows the Holy Spirit theme to be read consistently. In the previous narrative it is Jesus who has given them the words to say. Since Jesus operates by the Holy Spirit (1:10,12; 3:29-30) his message is the message of the Holy Spirit (cf. the implicit assumption behind 12:36). It therefore seems reasonable to say that whereas the time of speaking is future, the time when the utterance is given is during Jesus' ministry to the disciples. Although they will be tempted to be ashamed of Jesus and his words in the face of suffering (8:31-9:1), they have been given the words to say. In that hour, they simply need to "*keep on saying* this" (present imperative).

e. This reading also makes sense of the explanatory clause. By this stage the disciples ought to know that they are not the speakers, in the sense of being the authors of what they are to say. They have been drafted into Jesus' mission (1:16-20). They need to stick with him and his words, the gospel (8:35, 38). They are not to worry about what to say, for it is not their responsibility to invent the content. The true speaker is the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus Christ. They are to say the message that the Spirit-anointed One has given them already. They are to stand firm in that future hour, and keep on

speaking the gospel of the kingdom that they have been authorised to speak.

The willing Spirit (14:38)

Commentators almost unanimously explain 14:38 as a reference to the spirit resident in the disciples, whether their own human spirit (cf 2:8, 8:12) or the Holy Spirit imparted to them.[11] But this too can be read, with good contextual support, as a reference to the Holy Spirit who is upon Jesus. He is the only bearer of the Spirit in the story so far, and certainly the only willing Spirit in the garden (Mark 14:36). The disciples on the other hand, are examples of the flesh—humanity in all its weakness.[12] Jesus knows the strain of this hour, and he assures them that although their flesh is weak, he is willing to bear with them through this last trial. He has adequately prepared them for it (cf. 13:11); all they need to do is watch and pray (13:35-7). This saying is, therefore, an encouragement to stick with him to the end and not to give in because of their natural human weakness.

The Spirit and the Suffering Servant

Although 14:38 is the last reference to πνεῦμα ("spirit"), some find a "Markan Pentecost" in 15:37, 39, by taking the word ἐκπνεω ("expire") as Jesus giving the Spirit.[13] But this verse is

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11 This link is usually made through the supposed echo of the "willing spirit" of Ps 51:10 (MT 14) [Schweizer, *TDNT*, VI, 396f., followed by Lane, 52, and Cranfield, 434]. But this rests upon a fairly tenuous exegesis of Psalm 51.

12 It is important to avoid a Pauline flesh-spirit psychology at this point, for the dichotomy is foreign to the Gospels. The prior usages of "flesh" in 10:8 and 13:20 are thoroughly consistent with the Old Testament conception of "flesh" being our mortal human frailty, and its opposite, "Spirit", being God's domain and his glory. The dichotomy then becomes weak humanity vs willing Divinity. The contrast "Spirit" (Jesus) vs "flesh" (disciples) fits well with the sustained contrast between Jesus and his disciples in this section.

13 See van Iersel "Time perspective", 140-141. H.M. Jackson "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle from the Cross", *NTS* 33/1 (87) 26-27,

led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted as the Son of God (vv. 3, 6), it is not surprising to find him resisting "the temptation to be Messiah in any other way than that of the obedient Son and Suffering Servant".[20]

The pre-resurrection mission to Israel

The significance of Beelzebub

The next major teaching on the Spirit occurs in chapters 9-12. These chapters give obvious prominence to the Beelzebub controversy. Two earlier references to it (9:34; 10:25) guide the story towards towards 12:22ff. where the detailed account will be given.

We first hear of the Beelzebub charge after Jesus gives sight to the blind and speech to the dumb (9:27-34; cf. Isa 35:5-6). His action elicits wonder from the crowds (v.33), and the Beelzebub charge from the Pharisees (v.35). Jesus then responds to this lack of leadership in Israel (9:36) by requesting prayer for more workers for the harvest of Israel which now stands ready (9:35-38; cf. 3:7-12). The mission discourse follows closely (10:1-42) and, given 10:25, appears to be Jesus' response to the Beelzebub charge.

Help for the disciples? (10:19-20)

The twelve are given authority to be involved in Jesus' mission to Israel (vv. 5-6, 23, 34). This mission will be cut short by the coming of the Son of Man (v.23) which, I take it,

which once again quotes Isa 42:1. Three things improve the connection with Isa 42:1. Firstly the change to "This is" is not simply for an objectifying purpose; it brings the quote more into line with the "here is" of Isa 42:1. Secondly, it is significant that it is the "Spirit *of God* ", as in Isa 42:1. And thirdly, the preposition is also brought into line with Isa 42:1 (*ἐπ' αὐτόν*, "upon him", v.16). Hill, "Son", 8-9. Hill also points out that Matthew repeats this quote at the transfiguration; yet more evidence that the Servant theme is his special concern.

20 H. J. B. Combrink, "The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative", *TynB* 34 (1983), 79.

refers to Jesus' resurrection.[21] They will experience opposition like that which Jesus experienced (v.25) and see deep division within Israel (vv. 34-39). As predicted by John (3:7-12), the Servant's ministry brings a separating judgment to Israel (vv. 21, 34-42). In this pre-resurrection mission context, the disciples are promised help from the Holy Spirit (vv. 19-20).[22]

Although usually taken as the promise of God's special help in the situation of being on trial for the faith, it may be possible to read this saying in the same way here as suggested for Mark 13:11, given the same ambiguity. The situation of speech may well be in the future (*δοθήσεται*, "will be given"), but it is obvious that there is no need for a future giving of the words to be spoken, for Jesus has already told them what to say (10:7). In view of this, 10:19-20 encourages them to be faithful to the commission they have received from Jesus. There is no cause for worry—they are not the speakers, he is! Despite the harvest being ready, Israel has misread the Servant, and will continue to misread his disciples. Nevertheless, they are authorised by the Spirit (v.20; cf. 10:1, 40)[23] and they only need remember to speak the message (vv. 16-20), openly and without fear (vv. 26-31).

A second Servant quote (12:15-21)

Just prior to giving the details of the Beelzebub story,

21 It is not the place to argue this at length. In the first instance, this saying would have been understood in terms of the apocalyptic day of judgment (Dan 7: 13-14)—"the last day" expected in the OT. However, following the line set by J. A. T. Robinson, T. F. Glasson and others (see J. A. T. Robinson, "The Second Coming - Mark xiv.62", *ExpT* 67/11 [1956], 336-340) it makes most sense of the Son of Man theme in the Gospels to consider this coming "last day" to be Jesus' resurrection-ascension-exaltation.

22 If Matthew was one of Mark's first readers, then his relocation of Mark 13:11 into the pre-resurrection Israel mission context adds weight to the interpretation of that saying offered here.

23 *ἐν ὑμῖν* ("in/by you") need not be taken as indwelling language for there is no indication that this has occurred, or that it will until Pentecost. The use of *ἐν ὑμιν* is an analogy with 10:1; they are now the authorised representatives of the Father.

Matthew strengthens his Servant emphasis by quoting at length Isaiah 42:1-4, at what is a crucial narrative location (12:15-21).[24] This clearly reinforces the baptismal explanation that Jesus is the Servant,[25] and that the Spirit is what equips him for this role.

The quote explains one of Jesus' commands to silence (vv. 15-16)[26] in terms of the Suffering Servant. It is a longer quote than at the baptism, focusing more upon the Servant's function (vv. 18d, 20c-21). The Servant will maintain his lowly, withdrawing stance in the midst of unbelieving Israel until the time when he will bring justice to the nations (v.20c). As Isaiah had foretold, the Servant's ministry will eventually issue in a victory that will have consequences beyond Israel, to the nations. But, in the meantime, his pattern is that of the unobtrusive Servant, upon whom God has put his Spirit (12:18). The Beelzebub story follows, in support of the claim that this quote ("I will pour my Spirit out upon him," 12:18) applies to Jesus.[27]

The Beelzebub controversy (12:22ff.)

An obviously significant part of Jesus' reply to the charge that he operates by Beelzebub is his counterclaim: "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (12:28).

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24 "It would be difficult, in my view, to overestimate the significance of the citation of Isa 42: 1-4 in Matt 12:1 8-21. Not only does it express Matthew's conception of the role of Jesus as Servant and the nature of his ministry in obedient lowliness and mercy: it contributes ... to the structuring of all of chapter 12 by the evangelist, and, as we have hinted, what it says about Jesus' vocation as Servant underlies much else that comes to expression in various parts of the Gospel." Hill, "Son ", 12.

25 Far from subsuming Servant under Son, Matthew omits Mark's reference to Son (cf. Mark 3: 7-12) and "here makes the servant motif pre-eminent" (Carson, 286 with Hill).

26 Not Jesus' healing ministry in general (contrast Carson, 285). Such commands occur five times in Matthew: see 8:4; 9:10; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9, and Hill, "Son ", 10.

27 Hill, "Son", 10, following Cope. Thus the significance of chs 9-12 is to establish Jesus as the Spirit-appointed Servant in spite of Israel's rejection of him.

This statement links together the exorcisms, the Spirit and the kingdom of God.[28] The view that the kingdom has in some way commenced within Jesus' ministry [29] is derived largely from this connection between exorcism and the kingdom. On the basis of the connection between the Spirit and the kingdom, some treat these two as virtual equivalents.[30] However, when the Beelzebub incident is read in the light of the preceding quote from Isaiah 42, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" in v.28 is equivalent to "If I cast out demons as the Servant of the Lord."[31] This means that the relationship between exorcisms, Spirit and kingdom can explained more precisely.

In Isaiah the new age would dawn (Isa 54-55) only when the Servant's ministry had run its full course (Isa 42-53).[32] The kingdom of God is the apocalyptic equivalent to Isaiah's new age (cf. Dan 7:13-14), and so it too can be expected only after the Servant has completed his ministry. What Jesus is saying here (12:28) is that if he does the exorcisms by the Spirit of God, this means that he is the Servant. And if the Servant has arrived and is exercising his ministry within Israel, then the kingdom of God is imminent indeed. All that

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28 "Kingdom of God" is an equivalent for Matthew's preferred term, "kingdom of Heaven". Here it is used as a suitable contrast to Kingdom of Satan in v. 26. Contrast Pamment, "kingdom of Heaven", at this point, who distinguishes them, understanding the kingdom of God as a general concept—"God's reign".

29 For example: "What is certain is that Jesus knows that his exorcisms, performed by the Spirit of God, prove that the Kingdom age has already dawned" (Carson, 289). This verse (and its counterpart in Luke 11:20) has borne almost the entire burden for this understanding of the kingdom!

30 E.g., "Where the Spirit is, there is the Kingdom." J. D. G. Dunn makes much of this (for example in "Spirit and Kingdom", *ExpT* 82 [1970-71], 36-44), although it was coined in 1888 by H. Gunkel. See M. M. B. Turner "The Significance of receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A survey of Modern Scholarship", *TrinJ* 2/2 (1981), 133. Carson, 289, rightly argues that Dunn has overstated his "Spirit Christology" and provides a critique.

31 Carson, 289, notes the term Spirit of God clearly connects with v.18 of the Isaiah quote (cf. Matt 3:16).

32 "The logic of the placement of chs 54 and 55 suggests that all this has been achieved by the suffering and death of Yahweh's Servant ... He will do nothing less than usher in the new era, the age of the new creation." Dumbrell, "Servant," 113.

remains is for the Servant to complete his course by his suffering and death, and then the kingdom of God will arrive.

Thus ἔφθασεν ("has come upon", NIV) is to be understood in the same sense as ἤγγικεν, ("has drawn near", cf. 3:2; 4:17) meaning, not that the kingdom has arrived in any definitive way, but that it is imminent indeed now that the Servant has begun his ministry.[33] The saying does not talk of the actual *arrival* of the kingdom, but instead underlines the *inevitability* of the Kingdom's arrival now that the Servant of the Lord has come to Israel.[34]

The blasphemy against the Spirit (12:31-32)

This reading also solves the puzzle of Matthew's version of the blasphemy against the Spirit. Usually, in verse 32, "the Son of Man" is understood to be referring to Jesus in his earthly ministry, and "the Holy Spirit" to be referring to the post-resurrection situation. However, if the Holy Spirit is explained in relation to Jesus as Servant, then this usual understanding should be reversed. The Son of Man is the still future item (10:23; cf. 12:40),[35] and so a word spoken against him could be forgiven.[36] But the Holy Spirit is already active

33 The expression "must mean that the Kingdom of God has come upon you proleptically, in anticipation of the future Kingdom which still lies ahead." H. V. Martin, "The Messianic Age", *ExpT*. 52 (1940-41) 272, although his position, too, requires a bit of fine tuning. This is the sense whenever the verb appears in the NT: Rom 9:31; 2 Cor 10:14; Phil 3:16; 1 Thess 4:15, and especially 1 Thess 2:16 which, like Matt 12:28 (=Lk11:20), uses the preposition ἐπί ("upon"). D. Daube, *The Sudden in Scripture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 35-36, points out the disastrous nature of "being overtaken", as he translates it, by the kingdom of God, (cf. LXX Judg 20:34; 20:42; Eccl 8:14; Dan 4:21, 28).

34 This view then comports well with Matthew's teaching on the kingdom of Heaven, which consistently places the kingdom in the future with respect to Jesus' ministry. Cf. M. Pamment, "Kingdom of Heaven".

35 Jesus does refer to himself in his earthly ministry as the Son of Man (8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8) but also to the unambiguous *coming* of the Son of Man as an event still future to his earthly ministry. I am proposing a re-classifying of this saying into this latter category.

36 Especially if his age was peculiarly the age of forgiveness, whereas the Servant's time was the age of judgment, cf. 9:6. Chapter 13 will explain further that the Servant exercises a temporary hardening ministry,

in the Servant (vv. 28-29), and so there can be no neutrality towards him (v.30). His opponents need to be warned: a blasphemy such as the one they have hurled at him already, will remove them from the forgiveness he has come to bring (vv. 31-32). If Israel fails to recognise that Jesus is the Servant, then they will be with the chaff and not the wheat in the final harvest harvest (cf. 3:7-12; 6:26; 9:35ff.; 13:3-43).

It seems that "this generation" amongst whom Jesus moves, is especially culpable if it rejects the Servant-Son. It is fruitless and evil (vv. 33-37; cf. 3:7-12; Isa 5:1-7; 3:13-15), and its "idle words" about Jesus (v.36; cf. v.24) will bring condemnation. Unless this generation accepts the Servant's ministry now that he stands amongst them by the Spirit of God, there will be no forgiveness for them. This "wicked and adulterous generation" will be roundly condemned at the judgment day (12:38-45; cf. 11:20-24; 16:1-4). In this way, the "fire" of eternal judgment is brought by the "Spirit" through the Servant's ministry. Israel's time has run out because the Spirit has come upon the Servant in "this generation". This generation, therefore, has a special opportunity to repent, before its last state becomes worse than the first (vv. 43-45).

Although there is no equivalent of Mark's baptism saying (Mark 10:38-9), the image of the cup is still prominent (20:22; 26:27, 39, 42), and it is clear that Jesus dies as the Servant (20:28), and that his commission to serve and save his people is fulfilled on the cross.[37] His death is therefore linked to John's promise (of baptism by Spirit and fire), not so much verbally (as in Mark) but thematically.[38]

Matthew's passion story contains the same ambiguous references to the Spirit as Mark (26:41; 27:50) and I will pass them by.

modelled upon Isa 6, to enable God's judgment to fall.

37 Combrink, "Structure", 86.

38 Note also the sustained harvest imagery, and the sustained expectation of the last day judgement, which is effected at the cross. This may well be the significance of the apocalyptic sounding account at 27:51-53.

The post-resurrection mission to the nations

The last mention of the Spirit is in 28:18-20,[39] as the mission to the nations is launched. The Servant has completed the baptism of Israel, and now his ministry will be extended to all nations. They too will be baptised, only their baptism will not simply be that of the Servant, it will be in the name of "the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". Presumably through this means Jesus' commission to be Emmanuel is at last fulfilled ("I am with you always," v.20). But exactly how Jesus will be present is not stated in terms other than this promise.

Conclusions: Matthew

Others have noticed the close link between the Spirit and Jesus in Matthew.[40] This link is explained by Matthew's

39 A passage not without its importance in the history of the doctrine of the Spirit: "This passage became the cornerstone of Basil's case", J. Pelikan, "The 'Spiritual Sense' of Scripture: the exegetical basis for St Basil's doctrine of the Holy Spirit", in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A 1600th Anniversary Symposium* (P. J. Fedwick, ed.; Toronto: Pontifical Inst, 1981), I. 346ff. Basil's teaching on the Holy Spirit is his chief contribution to the history of Christian doctrine (360). Just how influential his teaching was can be illustrated from the fact that it was taken over almost to the extent of plagiarism by Ambrose (338).

40 The close link to Jesus has been recognised and linked to the supposed historical circumstances to which Matthew wrote. Several people argue that Matthew wrote to correct various aberrations within a charismatic community, whether ethical laxity (C. L. Holman, "A Lesson from Matthew's Gospel for Charismatic Renewal", *Faces of Renewal: Studies in Honour of Stanley M. Horton* (P. Elbert, ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 48-63), or false prophecy (Montague). In Montague's words: "To bring order to this chaos, Matthew wanted to root all authentic charismatic activity in Jesus, his words and his authority now handed on to the leaders of his community, successors to the first disciples. The touchstone for the Spirit was Jesus. Fidelity to Jesus' word was the measurable sign of the presence of the Spirit. You cannot have the Spirit without Jesus." To do this "... Matthew significantly removes any suggestion that the Holy Spirit is Jesus' replacement in the Church after the Ascension ... The role of the Spirit in the Church is toned down in order to highlight Jesus' own abiding presence in his Church. He is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt 1:23). Jesus himself is personally present wherever two or more gather in his name (Matt 18:20)." G. T. Montague, "The Holy Spirit in the New Testament", *New Catholic World* 219/1314 (1976), 267-268.

early narrative (even more clearly than Mark's) in terms of Jesus' role as the Servant of the Lord. Subsequent references to the Spirit can be reasonably read against this textual explanation of the Spirit as that which equips the Servant for his ministry.

The Spirit and Luke

The birth narratives and the Spirit of prophecy

The Spirit and prophecy

In the birth narratives the Spirit is associated six times with what is often called "the spirit of prophecy" (1:15, 41, 67; 2:25, 26, 27). Elizabeth (1:41), Zechariah (1:67) and Simeon (2:25, 26, 27) all speak by the Holy Spirit, and this phenomenon is often labelled "prophetic inspiration". John too is announced as a prophet (1:15, 17), although plainly in a class of his own since he is filled with the Spirit from the womb (1:15), and he appears as the last great prophet who comes before the Lord himself (1:17; cf. Mal 4:5).

In each of these cases, it is not the bare fact of the Spirit's presence that is the focus. These references do not, therefore, signal the outpouring of the Spirit of the new age after hundreds of years of prophetic drought.[41] The focus, as with all "prophetic inspirations", is not upon the means but upon the message. The role of the Spirit is to endorse the speaker with the authority of God, with the consequent requirement that the message be attended to carefully. When the message is attended to it is apparent that these people who speak by the Spirit in Luke's Gospel prepare for the ministry of the Servant. [42] However, the role of the Spirit is not *explained* by

41 Those who argue this way have to connect them with Joel 2, and the belief in later Judaism that prophetic inspiration had ceased in the time of Artaxerxes I (the time of Ezra and Nehemiah).

42 They have this preparatory role both within history and within the narrative. John will prepare a people for the coming of the Lord (1: 13-17) by preparing his way (1: 67-79; cf. Isa 40:3). Jesus is announced both as one who is "blessed" (1:42) and who will be the Servant (2: 29-32). His

any of them.

The Spirit and Jesus

The Spirit is associated with Jesus' conception (1:35). It must be noted, however, that the text links the Holy Spirit's activity with *Mary*, not with Jesus directly. Hence it is reading too much into this verse to say that Jesus was filled with the Spirit from the womb.[43] It is also reading in too much to talk of this being a new creative act on the analogy of Genesis 1:2.[44] All that can be said of this description of the Holy Spirit (= the power of the Most High)[45] is that "in conjunction with v. 34, the angel's statement indicates that the child is to be conceived *without human agency*."[46]

This miraculous conception will result in the child being called holy. This is not explained in terms of him being the bearer of the Spirit, but the Son of God ("so the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God"). Thus, even at this early stage it is obvious that the text has a much higher view of Jesus than that he is simply a prophet. No matter how much

birth is, therefore, welcomed by those faithful Israelites still awaiting the fulfilment of Isaiah's hopes. Simeon was waiting for "the consolation of Israel" (2:25). Anna and those like her were awaiting for "the redemption of Jerusalem" (2:38).

43 So E. Schweizer, *Spirit of God* (BKW 9; London: Black, 1960), 38. This verse was the basis for the early church's Spirit-Christology which, through mistaken exegesis, used the verse to speak of the logos entering Mary: see Creed, *Luke*, 19f. See also M. M. B. Turner, "Spirit Endowment in Luke-Acts: Some Linguistic Considerations", *Vox Evangelica 12 (1981), 45, 53-55.*

44 G. B. Caird, *Luke*, 53; Marshall, 70. Dunn, although distinguishing his own Spirit-Christology from that of the Fathers ("Rediscovering the Spirit (2)", *ExpT* 94/1 [1982], 15) talks here of the Spirit creating Jesus ("Spirit & Kingdom", 38; "Rediscovering the Spirit", *ExpT* 84 [1972-73], 10). Schweizer (*Spirit*, 3), is happy to talk of creative power, but rejects the notion that a creation/new creation pattern is being alluded to, since he feels that from the beginning Jesus is the one in possession of the Spirit, and that he is therefore not an object of its activity.

45 Considered as equivalents. See Creed, 19f. for early interpretations which distinguished between these two as Holy Spirit vs logos.

46 Marshall, 70, my italics. The use of ἐπισκιάζω ("overshadow"), which recalls God's presence in the tabernacle cloud, lends weight to this conclusion.

the Spirit is associated with the "spirit of prophecy" in Luke, when it comes to the Spirit and Jesus, the explicit conclusion drawn by 1:35 is not in the direction of "prophet", but "Son of God". Luke's birth narratives, therefore, strengthen the association of the Spirit with Jesus as the Son of God (cf. Mark 1:11).

Preparation

The Baptist

The Baptist gives his prophecy to answer the query of the Jews as to whether he was the Christ (3:15; he has already identified himself as the one who prepares for the Servant, vv. 4-6). The Stronger One will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (3:16), once again meaning the fire of the last judgment (vv. 7, 9, 17). Since Luke also wrote Acts, the fulfilment of this prophecy is often taken to be Pentecost. But before jumping to that conclusion, the Gospel must first be allowed to speak for itself.

The Baptism and the Temptation

In 3:21-22, the baptism is played down and the events surrounding the voice from heaven are played up ("opened... descended... came...").[47] Since it is already explicit that Jesus is God's Son (1:35), the allusion to Isaiah 42:1 perhaps gains some emphasis as the new piece of information which now makes previous hints plain. Jesus, God's Son, is endowed with the Spirit because he is the Servant of Isaiah. Fully equipped by the Spirit, this Son-Servant is led into the wildernes by the Spirit to be tempted (4:1).

47 Luke uses a regular Greek construction of ἐγένετο ("came") plus a string of three infinitives (Zerwich). The baptism itself is subordinated by being in participial form, as is the prayer. "The effect is to lay stress on the supernatural phenomena and to play down the importance of the attendant earthly circumstances" (Marshall, 150, 152). Cf. Isa 64:1; 19:11.

In Luke's earliest chapters it is probably true to say that the Servant theme appears to take a subordinate place to the presentation of Jesus as Son of God. This Servant theme really only becomes prominent as Jesus begins his public ministry in Nazareth.

The Nazareth manifesto

In 4:14 Luke reports Jesus returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. This enigmatic statement is clarified when Jesus enters the Nazareth synagogue and announces that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (4:18).

This "Nazareth Manifesto" is often recognised as not only climactic for the narrative so far, but also programmatic for Jesus' entire ministry, and in particular the narrative to follow. [48] Through the quotation from Isa 61:1-2, Jesus reveals that the Spirit is upon him, not because he is simply a prophet, but because he is the Servant of the Lord.[49] Despite his subsequent rejection (v.22ff.), Jesus has been anointed with the Spirit "to preach good news to the poor ... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

48 G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of Luke", *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (D .E. Nineham, ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), 159; Marshall, 177-178.

49 Because the anointing of Isaiah 61 is "clearly that of a prophet", and because Jesus uses a parable concerning a prophet about himself in 4:23, some have argued that the motif of Jesus as prophet is central here (Marshall, 183). But Dumbrell, "Purpose", 127, calls the speaker in Isaiah 61 "a servant personage". Cf. J. Muilenberg, "Isaiah 40-66" *IB V* (1956), 708-709: "Its affinities with the servant passages have naturally suggested that the servant is speaking." Despite the fact that this is disputed, it is quite clear that Jesus and Luke considered the relationship obvious. Marshall, 178, identifies Jesus here as "a figure who is to be identified as the Messiah and the Servant of Yahweh".

The journey to Jerusalem

The Spirit next appears in chapters 10-12, after Jesus has decided to head for Jerusalem because "the days for his lifting up" had drawn near (9:51).

The mission of the seventy-two

As Jesus approaches Jerusalem the sense of urgency increases. It is the time for the final harvest of Israel to begin (10:2). Jesus sends out the seventy-two to preach the imminence of the kingdom of God (10:9, 11), and they return with joy that the demons are falling before them (v.17). Jesus comments that Satan's downfall is assured (v.18f.) and then thanks God (vv. 21-22) and "rejoices in the Holy Spirit" (v.21).

This strange expression is not simply a truism (e.g. "Jesus was filled with joy and the Spirit before an inspired saying"[50]) but serves to recall the quote at 4:18-19, and hence the relationship between the Spirit and the Servant. For in the mission of the seventy-two Jesus sees his Servant ministry being fulfilled as good news is preached to the poor, as prisoners find release from their captivity, as the blind receive sight, and as the oppressed are released. Jesus rejoices that his Servant mission has begun to be successful (cf. vv. 23-24 and Isa 52:15; 60:3), and that some at least (i.e. the disciples) have perceived what is going on (10:21-4).[51]

The Spirit and the Disciples?

In 11:1 the disciples ask to be taught how to pray and Jesus gives them a prayer which focuses upon God's kingdom.

50 Marshall, 433. Note that the strangeness of it has prompted several variant readings.

51 Cf. Marshall, 438. The next series of stories reveal people who fail to rightly perceive what is happening: the scribe (10:25-37) is in the dark about the true way to "justify himself"; Martha (10:38-42) fails to make the right choice, unlike her sister Mary; and "this wicked generation" fails to see the greatness of the one in their midst (11:14-54).

Since the time that Jesus decided to head for Jerusalem the kingdom has been near, and yet Jesus tells them to keep praying for its coming.[52] A parable follows, encouraging them to pray (whether in a simple sense, or in a persistent manner).[53] Finally, the promises (vv. 9-10) and comparisons (vv. 11-12) provide assurance that these prayers will be answered. In v.13 the answer that is promised is that "the Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who are asking him".

Now, presumably the content of the praying (v.2)—the asking, seeking, knocking (v.10) and asking again (v.13)—is defined by the kingdom prayer at the beginning (vv. 2-4). It seems, therefore, that the request for the kingdom to come is related to the giving of the Spirit. From a post-Pentecostal perspective this promise could be understood of Pentecost, or even of a personal endowment with the Spirit for all those who ask for it. But in view of the quotes explaining the Spirit in terms of the Servant, cannot this saying too be read from this perspective?

The mention of John the Baptist in v.1 implicitly recalls his prophecy of Spirit/fire baptism which is still outstanding. Is it too much to suggest that John taught his disciples to pray for the fulfillment of this event, especially given the story in 7:18-35 which shows their eager quest for fulfillment? Also, the verbs in vv. 9-10 are in the present tense. Does this perhaps indicate that those who are asking, seeking and knocking are in some sense already receiving, finding and having the door opened to them? In 10:21-24 Jesus rejoiced that God had begun to reveal his Servant ministry to the disciples. Is it that in chapter 11 they are told to keep praying for the coming kingdom, with the assurance that they will be given the Spirit, not in any sense of post-Pentecostal indwelling, but in the sense that the Spirit ministry promised by Isaiah and already glimpsed by the

52 9:51; 10:9, 11. Notice that the request is for daily assistance in this urgent journey to Jerusalem, which also requires daily commitment (11:3 cf. 9:23), and that the present tense is used, stressing the continuous nature of the activity.

53 See K. Bailley, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 119-141, for the two alternatives.

disciples, will eventually be brought to completion for their sake?

Whether there is indeed a relationship of the Spirit to the Servant here is unclear from this passage in itself. However, the least we can say from 11:1-13 is that the Spirit appears to be somehow related to the kingdom. If the relationship is to be explained we will need more information. That information is given in the following story.

The promised Spirit and Beelzebub

The question that has been left hanging turns on how the expected kingdom is related to the expected Spirit. In the very next story, the Beelzebub controversy, this is exactly the issue. As we have already seen in Matthew, so now with Luke, the kingdom is imminent because the Servant is already present. Jesus' reply recalls the Baptist's Servant-orientated prophecy (vv. 21-23; cf. 3:16). The Servant is amongst them, working by "the finger of God", and that means the kingdom of God is just around the corner; their prayers are already on the way to being fulfilled.[54] Since the Strong One is present, he has made the day of judgment imminent. The promised baptism by Spirit and fire is well on its way to completion. Now is the time for repentance without delay and for the disciples to continue to pray.

The Spirit and opposition.

After receiving a scathing attack from Jesus (11:37-52), the leaders of Israel begin to oppose him fiercely (vv. 53-54). This theme of opposition is maintained into chapter 12, and Jesus warns the disciples to be ready for it. They mustn't fear men, but God (vv. 5-7), and must not disown Jesus, or they will be disowned by the Son of Man when he comes with his kingdom (vv. 8-9).

The meaning of Luke's blasphemy saying (12:10) is

54 The same arguments for this reading apply here as for Matt 12:28.

clarified by the same reversal proposed for the Matthew saying. At this present time there is no forgiveness for resisting the Spirit who is at work upon the Servant. In this wicked and unperceptive generation who oppose Jesus, the disciples need to remember that his ministry as Servant must be recognised and received.

If 12:11-12 can be understood in the same way as suggested for Mark 13:11 then it follows logically that the Holy Spirit is their teacher and that he will teach them what they must say in that hour. They have already been given the message (9:2; 10:9, 11) and he will teach them more about this before too long (eg 12:22-34, 35ff) so they will be well prepared by the time the hour arrives. With this assurance, they need to be ready to face the opposition that will only increase from now on.

As Jesus continues to teach, he urges his disciples to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man (12:35-48), and then he mentions the fiery baptism he still has to undergo (12:49-53).[55] The reference to baptism (v.50) and "fire upon the land"(γῆν, v.49)[56] and separation (vv. 52-53), all recall the Baptist's promise (3:16-7) that is still outstanding, and whose expectation has been sustained at various points in the story so far. It is obvious that its fulfilment is still in the future, for Jesus is in great distress until it is complete.

Given this connection with 3:16-17, some interpret v.49 as a reference to the Pentecostal Spirit, while still maintaining that v.50 is a reference to Jesus' death.[57] However, both sayings are plainly linked together, and are best taken as two metaphors of the same event, namely, the coming judgment at the cross.[58] Jesus is in great distress

55 Marshall, 545, finds the connection with what precedes and the line of thought within this unit unclear. On my analysis it is now clear.

56 γῆν is best read as "the land", i.e. of Israel. Note that this echoes the misguided Zebedee Brothers (9:51ff), and contrasts with them as well, for Jesus comes with judgment, not on Samaria, but "the land".

57 Marshall, 545-547; Geldenhuys, 366.

58 With Morris, 219. The event is described as the purpose for which Jesus came into the world (vv. 49, 50, 51), which is too exalted a description of Pentecost. But it is clearly the fact that he came to suffer and die as the Servant of the Lord (4:18-19; 4:34; 5:32; 9:3, 51, 56; 13:6; 19:10; 22:20).

because he knows that in Jerusalem he will bring about the new exodus (9:31) and the new covenant (22:20), and this will involve him suffering "the judgment which is to come upon the world".[59] The fact that 3:16 is an obvious retrospection from this verse suggests that, as with Mark, the Baptist's prophecy will find its fulfillment in Jesus' death.

Jerusalem and beyond

Although Luke has no ransom saying in his presentation, Jesus undergoes his baptism in Jerusalem by dying as the Suffering Servant.[60] The same ambiguity exists at 23:46 as in the Matthew and Mark parallels, but in any case the role for which he was equipped by the Spirit has come to an end.

Beyond Jerusalem, once he has risen again, he tells the disciples to wait for "the promise of my Father" (24:49). Although there is no mention of the vocabulary of the Spirit, this is regularly taken as a reference to him.[61] The alternative is that it refers to the promise of forgiveness of sins.[62]

If it does refer to the Holy Spirit, it would refer neither to the promise of John the Baptist (which has already been fulfilled at the cross) nor to a word of Jesus, but to an OT promise (which would be entirely apposite in this context; cf. 24:44, 45), and Joel 2:28-32 is the obvious candidate.[63]

See J. G. F. Collison, "Eschatology in the Gospel of Luke", *New Synoptic Studies* (ed. W .R. Farmer; Macon: Mercer Uni P, 1983), 363-371.

59 Marshall, 547.

60 He is recognised as such at 23:35 (τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐκλεκτός, "the chosen one of God"; cf. Isa 42:1). See further D. P. Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah", *NTS* 27/2(1981), 252-259; Collison, "Eschatology".

61 Marshall, 907, is surprised there is no explicit reference: "the promise is often linked with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4; 2:33; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13) and it is surprising that there is no actual mention of the Spirit here."

62 See J. Munck's comments on Acts 1:4 in *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Anchor Bible 31; New York: Doubleday, 1967).

63 Because this promise is to come ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ("upon you"), an OT reference to the general distribution of the Spirit is needed, and the promise of Joel 2 fits this criterion.

Everything concerning Jesus has been fulfilled (24:44-47). Now the implications of his ministry must be fulfilled for his disciples. In other words, now that the Servant's ministry is complete the new age can come, and the sign of the new age is the general distribution of the Spirit. Thus this is a "hinge text", bridging the story of the Gospel and the story still to come in Acts. The movement has been towards Jerusalem and the paschal events; now the movement from Jerusalem to the world begins. This is exactly what you would expect once the Servant's ministry is over, for now he begins to take his light to the nations.

Conclusions: Luke

Luke's Gospel, too, explains the Spirit as the equipment for Jesus' ministry. Luke's infancy narratives stressed the filial significance of the Spirit, but from the baptism onwards the Spirit was associated with Jesus' ministry as Servant. Subsequent references to the Spirit can reasonably be read against this textual explanation of the Spirit's role.

Some implications.

If the references to the Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels can be understood in terms of the Son-Servant role of Jesus, certain implications follow.

The Spirit and Christology.

The Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels is a subset of Christology. The Spirit is not explained in general terms, but is specifically presented as the equipment of Jesus the Son as the Servant. The Spirit upon Jesus does not, therefore, identify him as a prophet. "Spirit-Christology", whether ancient or modern, is a false trail.

Neither does the Spirit upon Jesus identify him as the

first "man of the Spirit". Jesus' experience of the Spirit is not presented as archetypical Christian experience, but as the unique experience of the Servant. Although his Servant role does have significant implications as a model of Christian discipleship (e.g. Mark 10:35-45), there is no evidence in the Synoptics that the Spirit designates the disciples for that role. The relationship between the Spirit and the servants of the Servant needs to be explained from elsewhere.

There is no, or at most minimal, reference to the Spirit indwelling the followers of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. Any "eschatological outpouring" on the analogy of Joel 2 must await Pentecost, after Jesus has received the Spirit a second time and in a new capacity (Acts 2:33). If some of the references to the Spirit are not read against the explanation offered by Jesus' baptismal scene (which needs far more exegetical justification than it is usually given!), there may be *some* hints of Pentecost in the Synoptics, but their focus is certainly elsewhere. The gift to the disciples that is portrayed by the Synoptic Gospels is not the indwelling Spirit, but the gift of the Servant's life, which alone gives access to the coming kingdom.

The Spirit and the kingdom

The relationship between the Spirit and Servant allows a more precise understanding of the kingdom.

Spirit and kingdom are not virtual equivalents in the Gospels. The statement, "Where the Spirit is, there is the kingdom," is anachronistic if applied to the Synoptic Gospels. The Spirit comes upon Jesus and designates him as the Servant. The kingdom follows the Servant's ministry, and is related to the coming of the Son of Man.

The activity of the Spirit in Jesus' ministry does not mean that the kingdom of God had arrived at that time. The Spirit designates the Servant, whose entire ministry prepares for the new age. The kingdom is not inaugurated *in* his ministry, but *by* his ministry. That is, once the Servant suffers on the cross, the kingdom of God can arrive. In Gospel

terms it is better to say: "Where the Spirit is, there the kingdom is imminent " (or from our perspective, "Where the Spirit *was*, there the kingdom *was* imminent").

This then urges a more careful presentation of the fairly commonly discussed "now-not yet" tension. ,This tension is most certainly true post-resurrection, but it is a misreading of the Gospels to say that it existed in Jesus' ministry. Jesus operated as the Spirit-designated Servant, whose death *prepared* for the new age. In the Synoptic Gospels the Kingdom is still future to Jesus' earthly ministry, and it is inaugurated after he has endured the cross in Servant weakness. For it is in his resurrection that the Son of Man receives all power and authority on heaven and earth, and it is then that the kingdom comes with power.

Conclusion

This exploration has discovered that the Gospel narratives offer a clear explanation of the Spirit's narrative role. The OT quotations from heaven when Jesus is anointed with the Spirit firmly link the Spirit with Jesus' messianic "Son of God" role understood in terms of the Servant of the Lord.

Despite the fact that further reflection is no doubt required at several places, the remaining references to the Spirit can conceivably and fruitfully be read against the backdrop of this textual explanation. If the contours of this exploration are largely correct, this view of the Spirit as the equipment of the Servant has fruitful exegetical results at several points and helpful implications for the understanding of Jesus and the kingdom.

Exploring further

1. Jesus receives the Spirit a second time according to Acts 2:33. How does this latter reception relate to the Spirit's earlier equipping of him as Servant? How does the understanding of the Spirit in Luke presented here influence the understanding of Acts 1:4f. and Acts 2?
2. The view of the Spirit presented here has explanatory power to solve several exegetical puzzles. Does it *create* other exegetical problems ? If so, can these be solved ?
3. If Jesus' death was the baptism in the Spirit promised to the people of Israel, are the Gentiles also included? If so, how?
4. What implications does the relationship between Spirit and kingdom in Jesus' ministry have for a modern understanding and experience of the Spirit and the kingdom?

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY'S CHURCH?

Peter Bolt

Synopsis

There is only one gospel. The gospel for today's church must be God's gospel, which is a proclaimed message of good news for the world. The search for the gospel's content is here restricted to Mark, as a representative of the class 'Gospel', although similar inquiries could also fruitfully be done in the class 'Epistle'. Several approaches are canvassed, which all seek to extract the gospel from the Gospel, before suggesting that the Gospel ought to be considered *as* gospel. Mark is then reviewed with reference to six stories (those of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the opponents, the disciples, the minor characters and the readers), and the persuasive impact of Mark is briefly discussed. The use of the Gospel of Mark *as gospel* appears appropriate in today's world in terms of its medium (since it is a narrative), its method (since it provides both a point of contact with and a critique of existentialist thinking, and a fully rounded Christology), and its message (since it provides God's actual answer to the problem of actual suffering). The paper concludes by urging the use of the Gospel(s) confessionally, and in the task of mission in today's world.

What is the gospel for today's church?[1]

God's gospel

A 'gospel' is a message that is proclaimed. A person's gospel is revealed in what they talk about, for whatever message they proclaim, that is their gospel. This means that, in one sense, there are as many gospels as there are people with messages to proclaim. Today's world, both inside and outside what is called Christianity, is filled with many causes, espousing many gospels. Just like today, the first century world also had many gospels, but, as Gerhard Friedrich puts it, 'to the many messages, the NT opposes the one gospel. [It] speaks the language of its day. It is a popular and realistic proclamation. It knows human waiting for and hope of the *euaggelia* [gospels], and it replies with the *euaggelion* [gospel].'[2]

This insistence on the singularity of the NT message over against the many other messages of the world begins with Jesus himself ('I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one comes to the Father except through me', John 14:6), continues with the apostles to the Jews ('Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved', Acts 4:12), through to the apostle to the Gentiles ('Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned', Gal 1:8-9). This conviction about there being only one message comes from the conviction that there is only 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all' (Eph 4:6) and that God is not only the God of the Jews, but he is the God of the Gentiles too (cf. Rom 3:27-31).

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1 At the outset of this paper, I acknowledge that I am not using the word 'church' in its thoroughly biblical sense of the gathering of the people of Christ, but I am following its common shorthand usage in which it refers to the Christian movement in general. I also adopt the convention of distinguishing the gospel message from the Gospel narratives by the use of the capital letter for the latter, even in quotations from others.

2 G. Friedrich, '*εὐαγγελίζομαι κτλ*' *TDNT* II.725.

Despite the many gospels in today's world, if 'today's Church' is to be 'God's church', then the gospel for today's church must not be 'another gospel' (Gal 1:6; 2 Cor 11:4). It must be the gospel preached by the apostles, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the eternal gospel to be proclaimed to every nation, tribe, language and people (Rev 14:6). It must be the gospel of God.

Good News

This gospel of God is always good news from the perspective of the one who believes it and proclaims it.[3] The NT persistently characterises this message positively and represents it as the preaching of 'great joy' (Luke 2:10), which, once believed, cannot be held in, but bubbles over to others, since it is so good that it has to be told (1 Thess 1:8-10, cf. Mark 7:36-37; John 4:39-42). It is true that the message is announced against a backdrop of present and future judgment, but this is exactly what makes the news of a rescuer *good* news (1 Thess 1:10). God has chosen to love this world under judgment by sending his Son, not to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16-17). The Son of Man has come to 'seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10). Not only has God fulfilled his promises to Israel, but even those outside of Israel have been shown mercy and offered hope in Christ (Rom 15:8-13; Eph 2:11-22). If today's Church wants to have God's

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3 D. W. B. Robinson, 'The Theology of Evangelism', *Interchange* 3/1 (1971), 2; 'Theological Note on "Preaching"', *Move in for Action* (Sydney: Anzea, 1971), 137-140; *Faith's Framework. The Structure of New Testament Theology* (Sutherland: Albatross, 1985), 53-54, has argued that it is 'linguistically naive' to translate *euaggelion* 'good news'. He recognises, however, that this opinion is 'based on certain conclusions of [his] own' ('The Church and Evangelism', Letter to the editor, *Interchange* 21 (1977), 62-63. Others argue for the 'good' dimension of the news: Friedrich, 707-737; F. Foulkes, 'The Church and Evangelism: a Rejoinder', *Interchange* 17 (1975), 26-33. If I understand Archbishop Robinson correctly, his point is that the gospel announces judgment and so is good news only if it is embraced. This actually endorses my point that the gospel is good *from the perspective of the believer*, and so of the proclaimer. If that good news is ignored, of course, it ends up being bad, for the one who ignores it 'dies in his sins' (cf. Jn 8:21-24), still under the wrath of God.

gospel, then it needs to recapture the sense of that gospel being good news for a lost world.

For the world

For the gospel is bigger than the church. It brings the church into existence as part of its wider work in the world.[4] Although the church must continue to believe and serve the gospel we must never forget that God's gospel is not simply addressed to the church, it is addressed to the world. What began as a gospel to Galilee (Mark 1:14-15), looked to the ends of the earth (Mark 13:10; 14:9). What began as a gospel to the people of Israel, issued in a gospel to the nations. What began as a gospel in the time when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, issued in an eternal gospel, suitable for all times and places and peoples (Rev 14:6, cf. Matt 28:18-20). This powerful word is carrying *everything* along to its appointed goal (Heb 1:3; Eph 1:10; 2 Peter 3:11-13). It is not just the gospel for today's Church, it is the gospel for today's world.

Proclaimed

The NT clearly shows that the gospel is news that is proclaimed. Although the messengers must also live out the message in a way that commends it, the two things are not the same.[5] 'Proclamation is inherent in the very nature of what the NT means by "evangel".'[6]

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4 D. W. B. Robinson, 'The Doctrine of the Church and its Implications for Evangelism", *Interchange* 15 (1974), 156-162. God's mission, through the instrument of his gospel, is prior to the church, cf. Mark Thompson's discussion in this volume.

5 This is one of the wider disputes in discussions of mission and evangelism. Cf. R. Bashford, *Mission & Evangelism in Recent Thinking 1974-1986* (Latimer Studies 35/36; Oxford: Latimer House, 1990). In fact, the debate is bedevilled by much conceptual confusion. Even to talk of a 'partnership' between evangelism and social concern, as Lausanne did (cf. Keith Mascord's discussion in this volume), confuses the fact that this attempts to compare things from separate categories. Evangelism is the task, or activity, that is central to God's mission, since it is only the gospel that saves (Rom 1:15-17), but love is the ethos

The gospel is fundamentally a spoken message. This is why the NT can talk of the gospel not only narrowly in terms of its content (e.g. Mark 1:15; Rom 1:1ff.; 1 Cor 15:1ff.; 2 Tim 2:8), but also more broadly. In this broad sense it is used to describe an activity, for the gospel is presented as being at work in the world (Col 1:5-6), running across the surface of Gentile territories (2 Thess 3:1), and powerfully changing lives in the process (1 Thess 1:5; 2:13). Also in a broad sense, since Paul can speak of his mission as the gospel (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:17), it can clearly be used to describe a cause, or a movement, the whole Christian enterprise.[7] The link is clear, for if the content is worth believing, the cause is worth espousing (cf. Rom 1:14-17); if the good news is believed, it is almost automatic that the gospel is then also spoken (cf. 2 Cor 4:13; 1 Thess 2:4).[8]

When we ask, 'What is the gospel for today's church?' we are therefore not simply asking the confessional question 'What is the gospel we are to believe?'. Since the gospel we

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in which evangelism takes place. Ephesians 4:15 expresses it better than Lausanne: 'speaking the truth in love'.

6 Robinson, 'Church', 156. This is clear from the language used. From the sender's end the gospel is evangelised (*euaggelizesthai*, 1 Cor 15:1; 2 Cor 11:7; Gal 1:11), declared (*kataggelein*, 1 Cor 9:14), proclaimed/heralded (*kērussein*, Gal 2:2; Col 1:23; 1 Th 2:9, cf. 2 Tim 1:11), spoken (*lalein*, 1 Thess 2:2), made known (*gnōrizein*, 1 Cor 15:1, cf. Eph 6:19), taught (*didaskein*, Gal 1:12, cf. 2 Tim 1:11), or presented for discussion (*anatithesthai*, Gal 2:2). From the receiver's point of view, the gospel is heard (*akouein*, Col 1:23; *proakouein*, Col 1:5), received (*paralambanein*, 1 Cor 15:1; Gal 1:12), accepted (*dechesthai*, 2 Cor 11:4), and, of course, believed (*pisteuein*, Rom 10:14 ff.), Friedrich, 730.

7 Robinson, 'Church', 157; Friedrich, 719-32.

8 The Greek of 1 Thess 2:4 should be rendered '*Just as* we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel *so* we are speaking'. This 'logic of the gospel' has been most recently expounded by P.T. O'Brien, *Consumed By Passion* (Sydney ANZEA, forthcoming). F. Foulkes, 'Rejoinder', 30, puts it thus 'in the early church there was less stress on the command to preach the gospel ... and more on the spontaneity with which Christians, endowed with the Spirit, ... felt impelled and anxious to share the gospel with others'. This logic is also true of 'another gospel', in that another gospel will always generate a 'cause' and actively seek to recruit people to it. This is a good way of identifying someone's gospel: what is the cause they are recruiting for?

confess also defines our cause, we are also asking the pragmatic question 'What is the gospel we are to use in our proclamation to today's world?'

So then, if the gospel is God's good news that is proclaimed for today's world, our next question is obvious: what is the content of this gospel?

The search for the gospel

In searching for the answer to this question a number of approaches are possible. Some early church fathers, when referring to the NT, spoke of its two parts as Gospel and Apostle.[9] Both portions could, and no doubt should, be examined to find the content of God's gospel, but the remainder of this paper will ignore 'the Apostle' and focus upon 'the Gospel', and, in fact, upon only one representative of that class—the Gospel of Mark.[10] At the outset, it needs to be said that that there are not two (or more) gospels in the NT. The Gospel and the Apostle speak the one message, albeit with some variety, and the approach taken here is purely for convenience. It is justified by the fact that although the usage of the word 'gospel' is predominantly Pauline, its meaning clearly stems from the ministry of Jesus.[11]

Even with the field of inquiry narrowed down to Mark's Gospel, several approaches could be followed in our search for the gospel's content.

9 Robinson, *Framework*, 43.

10 There are a number of helpful studies that include reference to the gospel in the epistles. For example, Friedrich, Archbishop Robinson's papers, H. Wetmore, 'The Gospel', *ERT* 14/3 (90), 226-228, and especially W. J. Dumbrell, 'The Content of the Gospel and the Implications of that Content for the Christian Community', *RefThR* 40/2 (81), 33-43.

11 Dumbrell, 33.

Extracting gospel vocabulary

A study of gospel vocabulary can help reveal the evangelist's understanding of the content of that gospel.

a. The gospel

The first occurrence of Mark's seven uses of the word *euaggelion*, 'gospel', appears in Mark's opening sentence, which sounds like a solemn announcement of things to come: 'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ' (Mark 1:1). This is not just a 'genre term', conforming to our practice of calling the first four books of the NT the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Mark 1:1 is integrally connected to what follows by the conjunction 'just as', which suggests that the following material will explain what Mark means by 'the beginning of the gospel' and immediately connects it with the unfulfilled promises of the OT.[12] Whether it also introduces John the Baptist,[13] or acts as a title to the whole work,[14] the content of the gospel is clear: it concerns 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God' who has some connection with the OT expectations.[15]

Next, Mark tells us that Jesus begins his ministry by preaching 'the gospel *of God*', and calling on people to believe that 'gospel' (1:14-15).[16] Here the content is the fulfilment of the times and the imminent arrival of the long-awaited

12 Dumbrell, 34, drawing attention in particular to Ps 40:9 (10), 68:11 (12); 96:2ff; Isa 41:27; 52:7; 61:1, says that '*bissar* is used to signal Yahweh's universal victory over the world and his consequent kingly rule, with a new era beginning in this way'.

13 M. D. Hooker, *St Mark* (London: Black, 1991), 33-34, cf. Acts 10:34-43.

14 In which case the entire story tells us the beginning or origin of the gospel that is a known (spoken) entity in Mark's community.

15 The words 'Son of God' may not have been part of this verse originally. For discussion see P. M. Head, 'A Text-Critical Study of Mark 1.1 "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"', *NTS* 37/4 (1991), 621-29.

16 Mark does not use the verb *euaggelizesthai*, 'to evangelise' at all; instead he uses the verb *kerussein*, 'to proclaim, preach, herald' plus the noun *euaggelion* 'gospel'.

kingdom of God. The appropriate response to this message is to repent and believe it.

Following the disciples' first glimmer of recognition of who he really was, Jesus tells them and the crowd that 'whoever loses his life for me *and for the gospel* will save it' (8:35), and that the Son of Man will be ashamed of anyone who 'is ashamed of me *and my words*' (8:38). Later he reassures the disciples that loyalty to him will have its own reward, for 'no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me *and the gospel*' will fail to receive more than adequate compensation in this age and the next (10:29-31). In this teaching on discipleship, Jesus so closely identifies the gospel with his own person that the two are indistinguishable. Loyalty to him and loyalty to his gospel are one and the same. It is a loyalty that not only consists of being unashamed of the public consequences of being attached to Jesus and his gospel in a sinful and adulterous generation, but a loyalty which is prepared to forsake everything else in ordinary life, and even life itself. Clearly when Jesus talks here of 'the gospel' he means more than just a message: this is the language of a movement, a cause, a mission. The gospel here represents the totality of the 'Jesus movement', and to be a disciple means a radical commitment to his cause even in the face of an adulterous and sinful generation. I have already alluded to this broad use of gospel elsewhere in the NT, now we see that it has its origin with Jesus himself.

It is therefore no surprise that this gospel cause has the world in view. In his apocalyptic discourse, Jesus warns his disciples of the trouble they will face in these last days of Israel, because of his name. He tells them that such suffering is necessary because it is the top priority that the gospel must be preached to the nations (13:10). After his anointing at Bethany it becomes clear that Jesus envisages that the gospel he spoke within Israel will one day be preached throughout the world (14:9).[17]

17 Mk 16:15, which is probably not part of the original Gospel, also shares this worldwide focus.

b. The word

Mark also shares the wider NT tendency to describe the gospel simply as *logos*, 'the word'.[18] The fact that these are synonymous terms is shown when Jesus is described as preaching both 'the gospel of God' (1:14) and simply 'the word' (2:2; 4:14-20, 33). The flow of the narrative suggests that the content of 'the word' was the same as 'the gospel of God', i.e. the fullness of the times and the nearness of the kingdom (1:15). Both call for the same response (1:14-20, cf. 10:21-22), since this 'word' included a call to discipleship (10:21-22), the kind of discipleship that endured the testing times of the last days (14:39, cf. 14:32-38). Its content probably also concerned the forgiveness of sins that Jesus, as the Son of Man, was authorised to bring to Israel (2:2, cf. 5, 10), and, since it was related to his parables (4:33), the word also concerned Jesus' ministry to Israel and the expectation of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God.[19]

c. The preaching

An examination of the word *kerussein*, 'to preach' may also help with the content of the gospel, if we notice what it was that was proclaimed. When this is done, we find that John preached a *baptism that had forgiveness in view* (1:4),[20] a forgiveness that would be associated with the *coming stronger one* (1:7). When the stronger one arrived, he preached *the gospel of God* (1:14). The preaching of this message was the reason for which he came, according to his own confession (1:38), and his characteristic activity (1:39). The twelve who were designated apostles were sent out to preach a message of *repentance* (3:14; 6:12), presumably modelled on that of their master (1:15). The cleansed leper (1:45) and the restored

18 Which, of course, takes on heightened significance in the Gospel of John.

19 C. H. Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Collins, 1935, ^{2}1961); J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (S. H. Hooke, tr.; London: SCM, 1962, ET ^{3}1973).

20 This is my understanding of the prepositional phrase. John's baptism of repentance did not bring forgiveness, but was preparatory for its arrival.

Gerasene demoniac (5:20) proclaimed *the things that Jesus had done for them* and the crowd in the Decapolis who had witnessed the deaf and dumb man's cure could not be prevented from proclaiming that *Israel's Messiah had arrived* (7:36-8, cf. Isa 35:5-6). Jesus' vision for the nations of the earth was that they should hear *the gospel* as the message proclaimed (cf. 13:10; 14:9; [16:15, 20]).[21]

d. The teaching

In Mark Jesus is often called teacher,[22] his ministry is often summarised as 'teaching',[23] and his authority is revealed through his teaching (1:21-27). The content of his teaching appears to be integrally related to his preaching of the kingdom (1:21ff. follows immediately from 1:14-20). It consisted of a *call to discipleship* (2:13-14, cf. 1:16-20); it involved parables such as the sower parable which urged *listening to the word with acceptance*, and the parables of *the kingdom* (4:1 ff.); it involved teaching on *the passion and resurrection of the Son of Man* (8:31; 9:31), the OT expectations concerning both the last days' *inclusion of the Gentiles* in God's purposes (11:17) and the identity and status of *the Christ* (12:35). His teaching also contained a severe *warning against the religious leaders* of Israel (12:38).

e. Other terms

Some terms used for the gospel elsewhere in the NT do not appear in this sense in Mark (e.g. *aletheia*, 'truth', *hē pistis*, 'the faith'). Other terms that are used elsewhere in the NT as synonyms for the gospel are associated with the gospel in Mark, but do not appear as direct synonyms for the gospel. For example, the language of witness is used not of the gospel itself, but of the function performed by the preaching of that gospel. So as various people proclaim their message they

21 The writer of the shorter ending of Mark believed that the preaching concerned 'eternal salvation'.

22 4:38; 5:35; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; 14:14.

23 1:21, 22, 27; 4:1; 6:2, 6, 34; 10:1 'his custom', 11:18; 12:24; 14:49.

provide a *marturion*, 'a testimony', against a hostile audience (1:44; 6:11; 13:9).[24] The word *akoe*, 'report', is also found once in Mark, used of Jesus' *fame* spreading throughout Galilee (1:28). Elsewhere in the NT this word links the gospel with an allusion to Isa 6:9-10 and 53:1 (Matt 13:14; John 12:38; Acts 28:26-27; Rom 10:16-17; Gal 3:2, 5; 2 Tim 4:4; Heb 4:2), passages which are also significant for Mark. However, in Mark's usage this word does not seem to be a full-blown synonym for the gospel, although the terms are obviously related.

It seems that vocabulary studies need to be content with what can be gleaned from 'gospel', 'word', 'to preach' and 'to teach'. Although we have gleaned something from the study of these words, as yet the yield is pretty meagre.

Extracting gospel proclamation

Another approach, which naturally overlaps with the vocabulary study, attempts to extract the gospel from within the Gospels by examining the proclamation of Jesus (and his disciples) to determine the elements of the gospel he (they) preached to Israel.[25]

As far as the disciples are concerned, we are told they will be made into fishers of men (1:16-20) and that they will be sent out to preach (3:15-16), but the only hint about the content of their message is that it urged *repentance* (6:13). In Mark the disciples appear to be merely an extension of Jesus' ministry, and the assumption is that their message was the same as his. So what was Jesus' gospel? What did he talk about?

As his public ministry begins, Jesus preaches that the times have reached their fulfilment and the kingdom of God has drawn near (1:15). On this basis he issues a general call for repentance and belief (1:15), and a specific call to follow

24 This usage may well provide a link with John's preference for 'witness', instead of 'gospel' vocabulary.

25 B. L. Smith, 'The Preaching of Jesus', *Move in for Action*, 51-58.

him, which appears to require leaving everything else in the process (1:16-20, cf. 2:13-14; 10:21-22, 29-31). His teaching has an authority that surpassed the scribes of the day, and could even manifest itself in power over the demonic world, both directly in exorcism (1:21-27) and indirectly through healing (1:29-34). He eventually revealed that this authority was that of the Son of Man who could dispense forgiveness to the land of Israel (2:10). He taught that he brought something entirely new, that couldn't be squeezed into the old wineskins of Israel (2:13–3:6), and he warned the people of Israel against failing to recognise who he really was (3:22-30). His parabolic teaching linked him with the Israel that Isaiah also experienced, too hard-hearted to hear and be saved (4:10-11). At the same time it urged people to listen well (4:3-9, 13-25) in view of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God which would go beyond the borders of Israel and encompass the world (4:26-34). He persistently exposed Israel's hard-heartedness, which was not only exemplified by the religious leaders of his day (7:1-13; 10:1-12), but also present even in his own disciples (7:14-23;[26] 8:14-21). Since he was someone who was heading for death at the hands of the authorities, he spoke of the radical cost of following him (8:31-38). This radical discipleship was also required in view of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God (9:1), which only awaited one thing—the suffering of the Son of Man (9:9-13). As he got closer to his goal, he taught more about his coming suffering and resurrection (9:30-32; 10:32-34) and once again exhorted people about the urgent need to join his cause (9:33-50), and to enter the coming kingdom through him (10:13-16), by adopting a radical loyalty to him (10:17-22). Such entry to the kingdom was humanly impossible, and only God could make it possible (10:23-27), but Jesus promised that he would certainly do this for those who considered their loyalty to Jesus to be above every other thing in life (10:28-31). This 'possible impossibility'[27] would come about through the great

26 Notice that Mk 7:18 deliberately compares the disciples' failure to understand with that of the hard-hearted Pharisees: 'Thus are you also not understanding?' He uses a word (*asunetos*) from the same word group as that in 4:10 (*suniēmi*).

27 Borrowing K. Barth's evocative phrase!

Son of Man, functioning as the Servant of the Lord, giving his life as a ransom for many (10:35-45). As the hour of his death got closer, Jesus continued to teach against the leaders of his day, saying that they were standing in the way of the Gentiles coming into God's purposes (11:17-18) while they themselves were blind to those purposes (11:27–12:44). He continued to exhort his disciples to be ready for the end (11:22-25; 13:5-37). After teaching that his death would be the Passover sacrifice that inaugurates a new covenant (14:12-26), his major teaching comes to a close. Apart from a warning that his disciples will all fall away (14:26-31), and a disclosure of his real identity at his trial (14:61-62; 15:2), the only other thing we hear from Jesus' lips is the cry of dereliction that screams out of the apocalyptic darkness before he breathes his last (15:33-34).

This approach has yielded much more content to the gospel, but we can still press further in our inquiry. Another approach is to find a gospel outline in the Gospel.

Extracting a gospel outline

The form critics treated the Gospel like a set of pearls on a string: the pearls were the paragraphs of tradition about Jesus (which were the real interest of the form critics), and the string was the fairly artificial framework into which the tradition had been inserted by the evangelist (which was usually ignored). After examining the framework of Mark's Gospel, C. H. Dodd[28] argued that Mark had not constructed this framework in an arbitrary or irresponsible fashion, but 'in shaping these materials into a Gospel, Mark has attempted to work to the traditional outline'.[29] By this 'traditional outline' Dodd meant the early apostolic preaching, which can be gleaned from the speeches recorded in Acts (and elsewhere). This outline was not always uniform, but 'some kind of outline formed a regular

28 C. H. Dodd, 'The Framework of the Gospel Narrative', *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: University Press, 1953), 1-11; *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder, 1936).

29 Dodd, 'Framework', 10.

part of the *kērygma* everywhere'[30], the fullest examples now being found at Acts 10:37-41 and 13:23-31.[31] From such examples, he concluded that 'the outline which we have recognised as existing in fragmentary form in the framework of Mark may well have belonged to a form of the primitive *kērygma*'.[32] Mark had to overcome the problem of the outline being 'far too meagre', but nevertheless, he used this 'meagre' outline as the framework for the construction of his Gospel.

Dodd's methodology was reflected in the Sydney Anglican Diocese 1971 publication *Move in for Action*, which attempted to uncover the primitive preaching of the gospel in the same way.[33]

Although Dodd very helpfully accorded Mark with greater authenticity than some previous form critics had done, the legacy of form criticism is still apparent in his work. The form criticism that launched Dodd's project assumed that the authentic teaching was in simple form, and there was gradually a development from the simple to the complex, and so from the more pure to the less pure form of the teaching. Gospel study under this paradigm consisted in seeking to extract the more original teachings from the Church's traditions, and later, when redaction criticism emerged, from the theology of the evangelists themselves. Under such a paradigm the enterprise of extracting the outline of apostolic preaching from the Gospel is entirely fitting.

However, the arguments could just as cogently be assembled for the reverse process. It is readily recognised that the speeches in Acts are summary statements of a much fuller presentation.[34] After all, most of them do not take very long to

30 Dodd, 'Framework', 9.

31 In this he is drawing upon the form critical work of Martin Dibelius who 'pointed to summary outlines of the life of Jesus embedded in the primitive preaching of the Church, appearing in various speeches in the Acts ... (as well as) fragments of such an outline ... in 1 Cor 15:3-7; 11:23-25'. *Framework*, 9.

32 Dodd, 'Framework', 10.

33 P. W. Barnett, 'Paul's Preaching reconsidered', 59-68; 'Peter's Gospel', 69-73; B. Smith, 'Appendix ii: Notes on Three Bible Passages', 141-146.

34 Dodd, 'Framework', 10.

read out loud, not even reaching the dizzy heights of the fifteen to twenty minute Anglican sermon, let alone that of the apostle Paul's dusk to dawn epic (Acts 20:7-12)! If the summary nature of these speeches is treated seriously, rather than the Gospel being constructed upon the outline of the primitive apostolic preaching, couldn't the Gospel itself, in all its complexity, be one example *of* that apostolic preaching?[35] In this case, the 'meagre' outline did not emerge into the complex Gospel, but the Gospel in all its complexity may actually represent an example of the full presentation of the gospel which the apostles were accustomed to preach, and which Luke succinctly summarised when writing Acts.[36]

If this is at least a possibility, then not only does Mark 'offer the earliest extant narrative of the Ministry of Jesus Christ'[37] but, as such, his narrative offers us the earliest extant *presentation of the gospel.* And besides, whatever the history behind the text of Mark, this is exactly what its final form purports to be, for it opens with the solemn declaration: 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. This suggests that we ought to use it as such.

The gospel and the Gospel

The first three approaches operate on the same basic principle, namely, that the gospel is a kind of summary statement that needs to be extracted from the complex final form that now

35 The paper read by E. K. Broadhead at the July 1992 AAR/SBL International Conference in Melbourne, 'One Hundred Years Later: Martin Kahler's "Extensive Introduction" reconsidered' argued in this direction.

36 In fact, even Dodd saw his work as preliminary to the preaching of the gospel in all its fullness: 'I do not suggest that the crude early formulation of the [g]ospel is our exclusive standard. But I would urge that the study of the Synoptic Gospels should be more than an exercise in the historical critic's art of fixing the irreducible minimum of bare fact in the record. ... Gospels and epistles alike offer a field of study in which the labour of criticism and interpretation may initiate us into the "many-sided wisdom" which was contained in the apostolic Preaching, and make us free to declare it in contemporary terms to our own age'. *Apostolic Preaching*, 78.

37 Dodd, 'Framework', 1.

exists in the NT. This reflects the general tendency to regard the gospel as a sort of confessional statement, a creed that can be reduced to an absolute minimum. There is certainly a place for arguing that the gospel must be kept simple, in the sense of being unsullied by other non-central concerns;[38] there is also a place for credal confessions and the gospel should certainly play a role in them. However, the obvious problem with that position is that we *are not merely supplied with a simple gospel.*[39] In the providence of God we have been given a complex gospel and, adding to the complexity, it is in a fourfold form. Although there are times when a summary statement is both necessary and entirely appropriate, it must not be overlooked that when such a statement is given, any power that it has comes from the fact that it is not simply a slogan, but a summary of a much richer and fuller understanding of Jesus.[40] In other words, the 'credal' gospel is contingent on the gospel as Gospel. In the interest of simplicity, we must never lose the full-dimensional richness that God himself has provided in the Gospel story.

If the Gospel of Mark is regarded not simply as an expansion of the primitive preaching of the gospel, but *as* the gospel, then it should not be treated merely as a source book from which we may draw historical or theological information, but as a narrative with its own rhetorical intent. It is not just a *source* for the gospel, but it *is* the gospel. As *gospel*, it aims to make an impact upon its readers, to engage them with its story and so move them in a certain specific direction. Its content will serve this persuasive purpose. This brings us closer to answering our question. If the final form of Mark is regarded as gospel, the question 'What is the gospel?' becomes

38 P. W. Barnett, 'The Purity of the Gospel', *Agenda for a Biblical Church* (Sydney: AIO, 1981), II.214-15; Robinson, 'Theology', 3.

39 My statements here are not intended to deny the presence of the occasional summary of the gospel found in the epistles and Acts, but merely to reinforce the presence of the four Gospels in the NT.

40 This helps to explain why the various summary statements that can be found in the NT are not always the same. If the movement was from credal confession to Gospel, this presents a problem. However, if the movement is the reverse, a summary can be made which isolates the points relevant to the argument at hand, which makes any difference to other summaries fairly insignificant.

'What is the story that the Gospel of Mark aims to impress upon the lives of its readers?'

The Gospel as the gospel

To answer that question, the best thing to do would be to read Mark aloud in its entirety and ask the listeners for the impressions they were left with and where it had moved them. In this paper I will attempt to briefly present Mark's story, aware that the danger of doing so is that it moves us away from the dynamic form of the story itself and into the abstract world of classifying and systematising. Although such a presentation lacks the impact that comes only through reading the story itself, Mark can be discussed in terms of five interrelated stories.

The main story: Jesus

From the opening verse it is clear that Mark's main story concerns Jesus. The opening prologue informs the reader of his true identity. He is immediately linked with OT promises which give him a most exalted status, since, according to those promises, the one who would come after the messenger was the LORD himself. After his baptism the Spirit comes upon him, designating him the long-awaited Servant-Messiah (1:11, cf. Isa 42:1; Ps 2:7). He clashes with Satan (1:13) before launching out on his mission (1:14-15). His authority is immediately apparent (1:21-28), and eventually explained as the authority of the Son of Man who is able to forgive sins (2:10). John the Baptist had promised the people of Israel that the stronger one was coming, bringing the forgiveness they were after. Jesus reveals that he is authorised to do so as the Son of Man. They need to recognise his authority, or they will miss out on forgiveness altogether, and be liable for eternal sin (3:22-30). Thus, the opening chapters of Mark take up where the OT left off: Israel is already under judgment and awaiting forgiveness (cf. Isa 40:1ff.). The new thing that is

disclosed is that Jesus as Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:13-14) is authorised to bring this forgiveness to the land of Israel.

The next section in Mark (4:1–8:26) shows Jesus urging Israel to listen to the word, in the light of the coming kingdom of God. Nevertheless, on the whole, Israel is hard-hearted to what is going on in their midst. Even the disciples do not understand who Jesus is, despite being present at several miracles that display Jesus' Servanthood, Messiahship and even divinity. If they are to be changed, Jesus will have to open their blind eyes.

The middle chapters (8:27–10:52) open with a glimmer of recognition from the disciples, and further teaching from Jesus regarding his future suffering. The suffering of the Son of Man is the only thing that has to occur before the imminent arrival of the kingdom (9:1, 9-13). He stresses not only that the need to enter the kingdom is urgent, and necessary for salvation, but that entry is a difficult thing that only God can make possible. He also promises that God will do the impossible for all those who have radically committed themselves to following him. The climax of this section comes when he reveals that the suffering of the Son of Man must happen (8:31; 9:31; 10:32-33), because this is how God will do the impossible. Entry to the kingdom will come about through the Son of Man dying as the Servant of the Lord, a ransom for many (10:45).

In the next section of Mark (11–13) Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and clashes with the religious leaders. He prepares his disciples for the end, the arrival of the kingdom of God.

In the passion narrative, he once again explains his death theologically, this time as the Passover sacrifice that brings in the New Covenant, the last Passover before the kingdom of God arrives (14:12-25). He is arrested in a great time of distress for himself and his disciples. At his trial he reveals that he is Israel's Messiah, and that he will soon be installed as the LORD of Psalm 110, and the Son of Man of Dan 7:13 (14:61-62). In the midst of great tragedy, he dies, ironically recognised as king. In his death, the structures of national Israel are judged and theologically come to an end. Jesus is buried, but three days later, in fulfilment of his own

predictions, he rises again from the dead, which appears to be the moment he receives the kingdom of God in power, before launching the mission to the nations.

In a nutshell, the main story is about Jesus. He was the Messiah of Israel, the Servant of the Lord, the Son of Man, who did things only God could do. It is about how he achieved what is impossible for any human being, through his own sacrificial death. For it is the story about how Jesus not only inaugurated the kingdom of God through his resurrection, but through his death enabled people to enter it. Such a story asks for repentance and faith, and radical loyalty to this Jesus and his cause.

The big story: the kingdom of God

Mark's Gospel sets Jesus' story against an even bigger story. Since his story cannot be understood without the OT, it is rooted in the real events of Israel's history, in their pains and turmoils, in the judgment of God they had experienced since the exile, and in their hopes and expectations for forgiveness and salvation in the future. When he announces that 'the times are fulfilled' (1:15) he is saying that world history has come to a decisive turning point. Since Jesus brings the kingdom of God near, urges people to enter it to avoid destruction and to find life and salvation, dies to make entry possible and then inaugurates that kingdom in his resurrection, it is clear that Jesus' story is set within a bigger story about ultimate issues in human life which concern people's future and the future of the world. In other words, Jesus' story says something real about the real world, and it says that this real world of human history has changed as a result of his arrival, and changed in a way that has implications for everyone. His cause is a big cause—it concerns the kingdom of God. This phrase sums up the expectations of the the OT for not only the end of all ungodly human power and sinfulness, but also, through such a judgment process, the subsequent removal of God's judgment. Jesus equated it with ultimate salvation, and eternal life in the age to come. 'With the Old Testament eschatology from

which it derives its force behind it, the gospel settles for no less than the restoration of all things.'[41] In other words, the coming of the kingdom of God which Jesus provokes, speaks of the renovation of the world on the grandest scale.

The counter story: the opponents

Not everyone recognises Jesus' significance. From the beginning he meets with opposition from the Jewish religious and political leaders of the day. Mark's story sets this human opposition on a cosmic stage, by clearly linking it with that of the demonic forces. Their opposition comes from a hard-hearted refusal to listen to the word, and it results in the horrifying spectacle of the killing of the Son of God.

The vacillating story: the disciples

Another story that is played out alongside Jesus' story is that of his disciples. It appears that the disciples vacillate between two leaders. They are firmly on Jesus' side, and yet they fail to understand what he is on about. Most of the time they appear to share in the hard-heartedness of Jesus' opponents (cf. 7:18). They ultimately desert Jesus, but there is the hope that he would restore them, after all (14:28, 16:7).

The episodic stories: the minor characters

The main story is made up of many other stories that are episodic. A number of minor characters, usually in desperate

41 Dumbrell, 'Content', 39; cf. 38, 43: 'On this view then, the content ... of the gospel is not limited to personal renewal or experienced redemption. This gospel must be construed in the widest possible terms as God's intention to bring in a new world order through Christ ... the redemption of creation itself. ... The individual assurance which constitutes the personal hope given to us now is the pledge that creation itself will finally be redeemed. ... It is only by our understanding of the comprehensive character of the nature of the gospel that a mission of the church in any age is possible'.

need, appear suddenly, encounter Jesus, have their lives turned right-side up, and then disappear just as suddenly.[42] Mark often portrays these minor characters very sympathetically, with explanations of their emotions, behaviour and circumstances. They often show more insight into Jesus than the disciples and the opponents, and they can even show characteristics of true discipleship, while the twelve frequently have no idea.

The reader's story?

Through these various stories, Mark's Gospel seeks to have an impact upon the story of the reader. Of course this occurs in a far more profound manner than I can describe in the space of this paper, but nevertheless I can make a few general comments about how the intra-narrative dynamics seem to be working.[43]

Mark draws the reader towards Jesus. From the beginning we are told who Jesus really is, and from that moment we share a privileged relationship with him, one that even the characters within the story do not share. He is always attractive, always appealing, and, although there are times when he is at some distance from the reader, even at those times we would prefer to be close!

On the other hand, the opponents are made repugnant to the reader in many ways. They are stubborn, politically conniving, self-motivated; they have so little concern for

42 1:21-28 the demon-possessed man; 1:29-34 Peter's mother-in-law; 1:40-45 the leper; 2:1-12 the paralytic; 3:1-6 the man with the withered hand; 5:1-20 Legion; 5:21-43 the synagogue ruler and the bleeding woman; 7:24-30 the Greek woman; 7:31-37 the deaf and dumb man; 8:22-26 the blind man; 9:14-29 the troubled father; 10:13-16 the rejected children; 10:17-23 the man ensnared by riches; 10:46-52 blind Bartimaeus; 14:3-9 the generous woman; 14:51-52 the naked young man; 15:42-46 Joseph of Arimathea; 15:47-16:1ff. the women from Galilee.

43 Of course, in the scope of this paper I cannot engage in a full discussion of Mark's narrative dynamics. I have done so in my unpublished M.Th. thesis *The Narrative Integrity of Mark 13:24-27* (Australian College of Theology, 1992).

justice that they kill an innocent man, and even gloat over his death. What makes it all the more horrendous is that they are prepared to kill their own king, who came to provide them with the way into the kingdom of God! In the reader's mind, they deserve to be set on the side of Satan himself! The opponents drive the reader away from such hard-hearted rejection of Jesus.

The relationship between the disciples and the reader is fairly complex and it changes as the story proceeds. In the early sections there is a distance between the disciples and the reader, who sees them as fairly dull and stupid for missing what is plainly before their eyes. Later on, however, the reader is drawn towards them more positively, and even begins to understand and feel for them. In this way Mark's story subtly draws the reader into the experience of the disciples and makes the reader see that their vacillation can be found within us all. Through this strange love-hate relationship, Mark shows his readers that they too need to learn the disciples' lessons: to hear the call to follow, to recognise the hard heart within, to feel the impossibility of entry to the kingdom, to turn to Jesus as the only way into the kingdom, to keep on giving him that radical loyalty that he requires, even beyond our own failures.

The minor characters act as a foil in this enterprise. These people provide concrete illustrations of what Jesus is willing and able to do. In this way they act as entry points into the story of discipleship, then into the story of Jesus, and then into the big kingdom story.

This appears to be the rhetorical intent of Mark's Gospel. The reader comes to the text very much a part of this real world that is filled with human misery and lies firmly under God's judgment. Through identifying with these confused, suffering characters, we are drawn to the one they found, who met them in all their need and was willing and able to do something for them. Through being drawn towards this great one, we find that he is offering ultimate solutions, for he is able to take us into the kingdom of God, the ultimate renovation of all things. So, through identifying with the characters, the reader is drawn to Jesus, and, through seeing

who Jesus really was, and what he really did, the reader is confronted with the only one who can bring us from the midst of all our need into the kingdom of God.

This persuasive task is helped by Mark's strange, and in many ways unsatisfying, ending (16:8), which throws the story open for the readers to finish off in their own experience. In this way he cleverly challenges his readers to repent of previous failures and to become involved in the cause of the risen Christ, while they await their own arrival in the kingdom.[44]

This is the Gospel according to Mark, but is it the gospel for today's world?

The gospel for today's world?

An appropriate medium

The gospel in narrative form is a most appropriate medium for today's world. There has been a general cultural trend away from the abstract and impersonal, towards the concrete, the pragmatic and the relational which has given people a 'story focus'. In the words of Gabriel Fackre,

> the reclaiming of imagination in countercultural and other movements of the sixties and seventies is inextricable from the growing interest in story. Disenchantment with things abstract, rationalistic, cerebral, didactic, intellectualist, structured, prosaic, scientistic, technocratic, and the appeal of the concrete, affective, intuitive, spontaneous, poetic contributed to the story focus. The challenge of right brain to left brain and the preference of 'first order language' to second and third order communication prepared the narrative soil.[45]

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44 Hooker, 391-394; T. E. Boomershine & G. Bartholomew, 'The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8', *JBL* 100/2 (1981), 213-223.

45 G. Fackre, 'Narrative Theology. An Overview', *Int* 37/4 (1983), 349. Fackre also discusses the influence of the Vietnam war, feminism, television, historical relativity, and existentialism.

Story-centred approaches are not only rapidly appearing in biblical studies (where, besides the rash of exegetical studies operating from this approach, we now have 'narrative theologies',[46] 'narrative christologies',[47] 'narrative preaching',[48] 'narrative counselling'[49] and biblical story telling[50]), but also replacing more abstract models in branches of the social sciences (e.g. social psychology).[51] This story focus can also be seen at a more popular level in the film, the soap opera and the mini-series, the burgeoning human interest magazine industry, ballad-type rock songs, and so on.

People can be considered from this story angle. They each have their own life story, which interacts with and incorporates the stories of those whose 'company we keep'.[52] Bad company will bring a note of tragedy to our story, good company a more enriched life story. Our stories are made up of many other stories, drawn from many sources, and we can change our story by opening ourselves up to even more stories, which can be those of other flesh and blood human beings, or those of literature, film, drama, music, and so on. In such a

46 Fackre, 340-52. He has also published *Christian Basics. A Primer for Pilgrims* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); *The Christian Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978 Vol. 1, 1987 Vol. 2). It is worth noting that Jewish approaches to theology have traditionally centred on story.

47 R. Tannehill, 'The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology', *Semeia* 16 (1975), 57-95.

48 R. A. Jensen, *Telling the Story. Variety and Imagination in Preaching* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980).

49 T. E. Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Introduction to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), contains suggestions that I hope will prove very fruitful in this area.

50 Boomershine, *Story Journey*, provides an excellent introduction to such groups in the US. The Australian chapter, NOBS, was launched in August 1992.

51 For example, M. & K. Gergen, 'The Social Construction of Narrative Accounts', in *Historical Social Psychology* (M. & K. Gergen, eds.; Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1984), 173-189, consider people's daily accounts of themselves and others as narratives. These can be viewed as, for example, tragedies or comedies, and can be modified and reconstrued. Such narrative psychology attempts to intervene in a counselee's problems by encouraging them to 're-story' their life.

52 For resonance with the ideas of this paragraph see W. C. Booth, *The Company We Keep. An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: Uni. of California Press, 1988).

milieu our narrative Gospel is a most appropriate medium, providing the only story that can ultimately transform the life stories of others, by bringing them into the kingdom of God.

This story focus is already being recognised in the context of Australian evangelism. One Australian gospel practitioner, Peter Leslie, has analysed Australian (student) evangelism like this:

> Students today are essentially pragmatists or even existentialists and the question they ask is, 'Does Christianity work?' ... Unless the apologist addresses the life experience of today's students the common ground between Christian and non-Christian is small indeed.

He notes two Australian authors who already operate within a personal framework (J. Chapman, *A Fresh Start;* B. Wilson, *The Human Journey*), yet urges that a lot more work needs to be done in this direction. He adds that the emphasis on the personal and existential means that the apologist must work with an appropriate epistemology, but is disappointed that Chapman doesn't justify why personal relationships is the best framework, and neither does P. Barnett[53] justify why historical verification should be preferred. Leslie points out that in the context in which our evangelists are operating, the problem of evil is still a big issue, and especially so for those with a relational epistemological framework.[54] He suggests a story focused model of evangelism. In his own words,

> when talking about Jesus, seek to apply Jesus' story to the story of the person you are conversing with. The gospel is the story of Jesus. Hence the 'tracts' which ought to be studied and learnt are the four Gospels. Learn from the Gospel writers. Tell people what

53 P.W. Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* (Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).

54 Quoted in Andrew Reid, 'Evangelism, Apologetics and the Student in the Eighties', *Interchange* 41 (1987), 7-9. I use the term 'problem of evil' more broadly than just the philosophical issue of how a loving God can allow suffering, to mean all the problems people have thinking about God as a result of actual suffering. In the Gospels, rather than learn a merely philosophical answer to a merely philosophical problem, we learn of God's actual response to such actual suffering.

> Jesus said and did in a way that impacts upon their lives and questions.[55]

It seems that the time is ripe for the gospel to be retold. Today's world needs to hear that the only story which can transform our own miserable story is the story of Jesus Christ. The Gospel as gospel is an appropriate medium for today's world.[56]

An appropriate method

Given the current climate, to use the Gospel as gospel is also a thoroughly appropriate method—in at least two ways. First, it endorses the historical nature of the Jesus story. An existentialist viewpoint tends to be a-historical or even anti-historical. This is well known in theological circles in the guise of the existentialist theology that has been with us for most of this century. A story centred method is readily received by such theological thinking, in which the story of Jesus promotes faith, irrespective of the historical reality that may or may not underlie that story.[57] There are dangers here that must be avoided, for when we talk in terms of the 'story of Jesus', if we want to talk in the same terms as the NT, we do not mean the 'story that may or may not have happened', but we mean 'the *true* story', the 'having-happened-in-history story' about Jesus.

However, the story centred method not only constitutes a dangerous point of contact with existentialist theological thought, but—and perhaps surprisingly—it also provides its appropriate critique. As Paul Althaus rightly argued against

55 Peter Leslie, 'Sharing Your Faith', *Salt* 3 (1989), 17-18.

56 This raises interesting questions about some current practice: Can the success of M. Bennett's *Christianity Explained* partly be attributed to the fact that its medium (prolonged exposure to Mark's Gospel) is appropriate for today's world? Can the apparent decline of Evangelism Explosion partly be related to its largely propositional approach?

57 Cf. Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

the Bultmann school, it is the Gospels that provide the historical flavour to the apostolic *kērygma:*

> In the New Testament we have not only the thoroughly kerygmatic apostolic writings, but before them, and along with them, the [G]ospels, which indeed owe something of their form to the *kerygma*, but are relatively distinguished from the epistles by their narrative character. ...This fact, that alongside the epistles stand the [G]ospels, with their narratives of the story of Jesus which preceded the first Easter, distinguishes the gospel sharply from a myth. In its own way it anchors the Easter *kerygma* in history, certainly quite differently from the way in which a modern historian would do so, but quite clearly enough. ... By the character of the [G]ospels, the New Testament itself invites us to ... historical reflexion.[58]

This recognition that the Gospels have such a clear historical flavour also begins to provide the justification, called for by Peter Leslie, for Barnett's historical verification apologetic. Such historical discussion must take second place to the first-order activity of proclaiming the Jesus story. Historical verification is, however, legitimate and necessary, since it is demanded by the nature of the Gospel itself.

The second reason that the presentation of the Gospel as gospel is an appropriate theological method in today's climate is that it *provides a fully dimensioned Christology.* Post-Chalcedonian Christology has had a confessional character, in which certain statements are confessed about the person and nature of Christ.[59] The gospel can also be presented as a set of statements, or as a creed of minimum-core beliefs. The problem with this approach is that, through its focus on statements, it can encourage a faith consisting in an intellectual assent to certain propositions about Christ, rather than trust in a person, Christ himself. Another problem with this approach is its doubtful suitability for today's climate. It is certainly legitimate in a context where a fully formed picture of Christ is already present. Within the church today, there appears to be a widespread mistrust of what is called Christian 'dogma'; however, even the most basic

58 P. Althaus, *The So-Called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus* (D. Cairns, transl.; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1958, ET 1959), 24-25.

59 K. Runia, *The Present Day Christological Debate* (Leicester: IVP, 1984).

understanding of Christian doctrine can no longer be taken for granted, and abstract confessions of faith do not seem to be as appropriate as they once were.[60] Our churches exist in a multicultural environment with a commitment to religious pluralism, in which it cannot be assumed that people have heard anything about Jesus, and it can be assumed that, if they have, they will not allow him any exclusivity. In such an environment it seems most appropriate to rediscover the Gospel as our gospel, for as people read the story of Jesus, they are confronted by the 'face of God'.[61]

The recovery of the Gospel as gospel leads us towards a fully dimensioned Christology such as that reflected in Martin Luther.[62] Luther's Christology was thoroughly moulded by his constant reflection on the Gospels, which taught him that 'the decisive thing about Christ is that God has opened his heart to us in the person, activity, and history of Jesus Christ and thus gives us certainty about how he feels about us and what he intends to do with us'.[63] The Gospels taught Luther that Christ is 'the mirror of God's fatherly heart'.

An appropriate message

Perhaps the questions our modern world asks about God can be reduced to two that are intimately related: Is God there? Does he care?

To take the second one first, it is interesting, although not surprising, that although many apologetic questions have changed in the last twenty years, the problem of evil/suffering

60 K. Hawtrey, 'Apologetics in Reverse?' *Southern Cross* (Oct, 1991), 20-21.

61 'Faith has a burning interest in the character of Jesus's actions among men, for here it seeks and finds God's presence "in the flesh".' Althaus, *So-Called*, 36. For the modern quest to find the 'face of God', see Runia, 26.

62 M. Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ. Stages and Themes in the Reformer's Christology* (E. H. Robertson, transl.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973, ET 1982); P. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (R. C. Schultz, transl.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963, ET 1966), 179-199.

63 Althaus, *Theology*, 181-182. All my Luther quotations come from Althaus, *Theology*, 179-199.

still looms large.[64] On one analysis comparing Australian apologetic issues for the 1950s and the 1990s it is the only theme that remains on the list, and the suggestion is made that the need for discussing this issue has actually been intensified by our society's success in pushing death out of sight.[65] The Gospel as gospel is a most appropriate message for this suffering world.

The Gospel of Mark provides ready identification with human need. As we saw earlier, the minor characters especially are portraits of emotion, distress and suffering. They also provide entry points into the answer that the Gospel offers. Jesus is portrayed as the only solution to the human search for life solutions that is still alive and well today.[66] He is shown to be the only way in to the ultimate answer to our human dilemma, the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God lies the only hope for the future and the only possibility for reorienting life in the present. This kingdom of God is no mere matter of individualistic salvation; it speaks of a whole new world, the renovation of all things.[67] The story of Jesus is central to the ultimate reality behind this suffering world. 'The gospel conveys the purposes of God the Creator for this world and the certainty that they will be realised'.[68]

The presence of suffering is probably also the driving force behind our first question, the question regarding God's existence. Klaas Runia has said that in this 'post-Auschwitz world', the problem of [actual] evil is focused on the question:

64 Cf. Peter Leslie's quote above. For the change in apologetic issues see A. Reid, 'Students in the eighties'; 'Dialogue with Students' *Southern Cross* (Oct 1991), 16-17; 'Two Decades of Evangelism' *Catalyst* 1 (Aug, 1992), 3-14.

65 Hawtrey, 20-21.

66 For example, D. Macken, 'The Caring, Sharing 90s', *Good Weekend* (8/8/92), has pointed out that our society is in the midst of an 'is-that-all-there-is-to-it' trend, with a consequent search for the meaning of life.

67 It is right to correct a narrowly individualistic focus (for the issue, cf. Bashford) by reference to the kingdom of God, but wrong to lose the eschatological focus of the kingdom's renovation.

68 Dumbrell, 'Content', 43 (on Rev 14:6). For further implications of this 'big' gospel focus and how it critiques current world structures, see W. J. Dumbrell, 'The Bible and Social Judgements', *Interchange* 27 (1980), 16-24.

'Where is God in this world? Where can we find traces of his presence?' If God cannot be found in this suffering world, then we have to answer 'No' to the question: 'Is God there at all?'.[69]

The climax and focus of the Gospel story is Jesus' death on the cross as a ransom for many. The significance of that event for today's world cannot be underestimated. For our world still feels the misery of human sin, and corruption, and suffering, and pain, and it still lives under the shadow of death, and, although often unrecognised, behind all that lies God's judgment on human sinfulness. In this milieu the question is asked, 'Where is God in *this* world?'. In the midst of so many gospels, the NT replies with the one gospel. And that gospel is found in all the complexities of the Gospel, the story of Jesus Christ. And despite many voices which persist in saying that a message centring on atonement is inappropriate for today's world, the Gospel says otherwise. For it tells us that we find God in the cross of Christ. When we look to the Gospel story we see Jesus Christ, suffering for us. And, in Luther's words once again,

> when I realise [Christ's loving vicarious substitution for us] then I must love him and must be committed to such a man. Then by way of the Son, I climb up to the Father and see that Christ is God and that he gave himself into my death, into my sin, and into my misery, and at the same time he gives me his grace...This gracious appearance and loving face of God preserves me.

The Gospels show us that this atonement is the climax and centre of the gospel. This atonement has decisively dealt with human misery, and sin, and death, because it has decisively dealt with God's judgment. It has secured the future, and brought the kingdom of God very near to us and for us. Without such an atonement, there is really no answer to the presence of evil in our midst. A gospel without this atonement will be confused, unclear, and ultimately useless to a lost world. However, the Gospel of the NT shows us God in the midst of Jesus' atoning sacrifice, and that is good news for today's world.

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69 Runia, 26. These questions issued in the 'Death of God' theology.

The gospel for today's church

In conclusion, what is the gospel for today's church? What this paper has attempted to argue, through discussing the Gospel of Mark, is that the gospel is provided for us in the complex message of the Gospels.[70] No matter how many legitimate uses there are for gospel summaries,[71] such as those found on various occasions within the epistles, we should take seriously the fact that alongside the Apostle, the NT also contains Gospel. This full-blown Gospel should be not be neglected in either our confession or our pragmatics.

The confessional question

Whatever the place of summaries and creeds, if they are to be helpful expressions of a real faith, rather than promoting mere sloganism or dry dogmatic orthodoxy, they need to be contingent upon an understanding of the fully rounded Jesus of the Gospels.

In this way the faith we confess will be properly focused (on the well-rounded person of Jesus), and our cause will be constantly set before us, as well as the dangers of resistance, the radical demands of discipleship, and the grace of the one we follow, who deals gently with us when we fail to follow as we should. Such a properly focused faith is nourished by the regular and constant reading of the Gospels, not just in isolated segments, but in a wholistic manner, listening carefully to their full presentation of Jesus.

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70 Including the Gospel of John, which, despite speaking with different words, still speaks the same message.

71 There are a lot of factors that keep us searching for the minimum gospel, some that are questionable (e.g. as a leftover from philosophical idealism and its influence on biblical studies), some that are perfectly legitimate (e.g. the desire to be simple and clear; the pressures of time; a credal statement for liturgical or polemical use; the different levels of understanding in the listener; the various needs of preaching/ teaching; etc.). The various summaries in Acts and the Epistles are helpful here, as are those in the Gospels themselves (e.g. Mk 1:15).

The pragmatic question

Despite the many obvious uses for a gospel summary in our mission to today's world, once again we should aim at a fully-fledged approach. In an age where so little is known of God's sole revelation of himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should seek as much as we can, and as often as we can, to expose people to the story of Jesus in the Gospels. For as the good news of the Gospels is proclaimed to our lost world, people will be exposed to the face of God in Jesus Christ.

Exploring further[72]

1. What is the relationship between the 'complex Gospel' and the various summary statements? When the need arises for summary statements, what must they contain? Which parts of the complex gospel are irreducible? If an attempt is made to formulate a modern summary, when does it become a distortion?
2. If there is only one gospel, how true is it to talk in terms of NT *diversity*? Instead of diversity, is it better to talk of the *multiplicity* of presentations, or perhaps *complexity* ? What is gained by the one gospel being presented in a complex fashion in the NT?
3. When the Gospels are read, what makes them sound as if they are talking about history? What are the historical questions that are raised for readers when the Gospels are read in today's world? How do the Gospels begin to answer these concerns?
4. How can the Gospels be given a real place in the life of today's church? What are the strengths and weaknesses of any traditional practices that encouraged Gospel reading? What new things can be done to facilitate Gospel reading?

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72 At the school of theology Keith Condie provided an excellent response to my paper for which I was most grateful, and to which I am largely indebted for the shape of these further explorations.

5. In what ways are people in today's world suffering? What effect does the Gospel have upon this suffering? Can the stories of the 'minor characters' be matched to specific issues for which they may be particularly appropriate? Try selecting one for a suffering friend and reading it with him or her. Note your friend's response.

WHAT WERE THE SADDUCEES READING? AN ENQUIRY INTO THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF MARK 12:18–23

Peter G. Bolt

Summary

Where did the Sadducee's case study (Mk. 12:20-23) originate? After dismissing 2 Maccabees 7, this article suggests that the Book of Tobit most probably provides the Sadducees with their story. Both they and Tobit talk of the death of 7 husbands and Levirate marriage in the context of an interest in resurrection. The article ends by suggesting that this allusion to Tobit may bring further nuances to the reading of the Gospel of Mark.

In the midst of the controversies of Mark 12, the Sadducees question Jesus about the resurrection (Mk. 12:18–27), something to which, as Mark informs his readers (v. 18), they were not committed.[1] Through the citation of Scripture (v. 19, *cf.* Dt. 25:5–6) and the application of a case-study (vv. 20–23) they attempt to ridicule the notion of resurrection. In their view, the case study demonstrates the absurdity of a resurrection, since it conflicts with the Mosaic law of Levirate marriage,[2] for 'in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?' (v. 23).

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[1]This standard New Testament picture of the Sadducees as denying the resurrection (*cf.* Acts 23:6–8, and the Markan parallels Mt. 22:23, Lk. 20:27) is confirmed by Josephus (*AJ* 18.1, 4; *BJ* 2.8.14 §165). The Mishnah evidently associates the Sadducee with the Epicurean philosophy due to this denial (Sanh. x.1, Gem. 90a, Sifre [Num. 112]), see G. Deutsch, 'Apikoros', *J.Enc* (New York: Funk & Wagnall, 1901, 1925) I.665–666.

[2]Gould, *Mark* (Edinburgh, 1912) 228, suggests that they make the point that the law allows for these successive marriages which the resurrection would make simultaneous. Could the same law teach both things? *Cf.* Nineham, *Mark* (Harmondsworth, 1963) 319.

It is not common to inquire into the origin of the 'case study' which is so crucial to the Sadducees' argument. Was it simply a 'made-up story',[3] an hypothetical case?[4] Were they making use of a case actually discussed by their Pharisaic opponents,[5] and, if so, where did this particular case originate? Was it 'the standard puzzle of the Sadducees, in which they sought to discredit the resurrection by reducing it to an absurdity'?[6] If so, why *this* puzzle? Where did it come from?

It is the intention of this article to suggest that the Sadducees may have been drawing upon a well-known story, no doubt favoured by the Pharisees, in order to make their point all the more forcibly. After (I) a preliminary discussion of the potential influence of the story of the seven Maccabean martyrs, I will argue (II) that the book of Tobit provides a more probable background. Returning to the Sadducees' question (III), I will suggest that this literary background may import some rich connotations into Mark's account of this controversy story. Given the importance of intertextuality to the reading of a text, this observation will have implications for the reading of this incident in its literary context within Mark's Gospel.

The case study is introduced simply by 'there were seven brothers' (ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοὶ ἦσαν, v. 20). Does this evoke any known literary connections? Two possibilities spring to mind.

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[3]'ersonnene Geschichte', Pesch, *Markus-Evangelium* (Freiburg, 1977) II.230, quoting Lohmeyer, *Mark*, 255; *cf.* 'the case looks contrived', Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, 1993) 701.

[4]So Anderson, *Mark* (London, 1976) 276; Barnett, *The Servant King* (Sydney, 1991) 239; Cole, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, 1961) 189, a 'man of straw'; Wessel, 'Mark', *Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, 1984) vol. 8:735. *Cf.* Hooker, *Mark* (London, 1991) 283, 'the number [7] is typical of such stories'.

[5]Anderson, *Mark*, 278, who provides no further details. Branscombe, *Mark* (London, 1937) 217, likewise appears to regard it as a real case. Swete, *Mark* (London, 1908) 29, points out that this is the impression given by Mt. 22:25, although, given my arguments below, the 'among us' may not imply contemporaneity, but could equally mean 'as part of our tradition/history'.

[6]Gould, *Mark*, 228. The recognition that it is an argument *ad absurdum* avoids the mistake that this is a Pharisaic question regarding the *manner*, rather than the *fact* of the resurrection.

I. The Seven Maccabean Martyrs

It is not unreasonable to suggest that this simple reference to seven brothers could have been enough to evoke immediately the moving story of the Maccabean martyrs for any who knew of it (*cf.* καὶ ἑπτὰ ἀδελφούς. . ., 2 Mac. 7:1). The suggestion is all the more plausible given that the Sadducees intend to ridicule the notion of resurrection and the story of the martyrs is one in which the belief in the resurrection from the dead is clearly and heroically expressed (*cf.* vv. 9, 11, 14, 23, 28–29, 36).[7] Both stories contain the notion of a woman receiving back her dead in the resurrection. Although this is in terms of a mother receiving her sons in Maccabees (2 Mac. 7:29), rather than a wife receiving her previous husbands as in the Sadduceean story, it could be argued that it is a small step from the one to the other.

The story of the Maccabean martyrs was certainly influential. The author of second Maccabees himself presumably reissues it (in abridged form?) from the five volume account of Jason of Cyrene (2 Mac. 2:19ff.).[8] Its influence stretched beyond the period relevant for our inquiry, inspiring Jewish and Christian reflections well into the Middle Ages.[9] The fact that the first-century work, 4 Maccabees,[10] chose to elaborate upon the story of the seven martyrs may indicate the popularity and emotional appeal of this story even during Jesus' time,[11] especially given any analogies that may have

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[7]2 Maccabees' interest in resurrection is also brought in the description of Judas, 2 Mac. 12:43ff.

[8]'The popularity of the Epitomist's work is attested by the loss to posterity of Jason's original five-volume history and the continued circulation of the digest. The Greek text of the latter was subsequently translated into Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian,' B.M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957) 141.

[9]See G.D. Cohen, 'Hannah and her Seven Sons', *EncJ* 7:1270–71; Y. Amir, 'Maccabees, Fourth Book of', *EncJ* 11:662; T.W. Manson, 'Martyrs and Martyrdom', *BJRL* 39 (1956-57) esp. 479–84.

[10]J.A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees* (AB 41A; New York: Doubleday, 1983) 26, dates it between 18 and 55 C.E.

[11]The case for the currency of the story may be further strengthened the closer the composition date of 2 Maccabees comes to the first century

been drawn between Roman and Epiphanian domination.[12] Although it is impossible to tell whether the author of 2 Maccabees—or Jason of Cyrene—was himself a Pharisee,[13] in view of its heroic support of resurrection belief, it seems reasonable to assume that the story was a particular favourite amongst the Pharisees.

If the Sadducees have this story in mind, they are perhaps adapting a favoured story of their Pharisaic opponents (with whom they evidently identify Jesus) in order to serve their own ends by reducing its' substance to absurdity. This would be a particularly cruel ploy, given the emotional associations that the Pharisees would have attached to the martyrs and their cause. Their deaths were not only noble examples of how they suffered rather than saving their own souls (*cf.* Eleazer's death 2 Mac. 6:28, 30, 31), but were for the discipline rather than the destruction of the nation (2 Mac. 6:12), and so they were regarded implicitly as the sacrifice of the nation (*cf.* 2 Mac. 6:1).[14] Being thus typological of Israel, the martyrs' story was offered as a memorial (ἕως ὑπομνήσεως, 2 Mac. 6:17).[15] The Sadducees' ridicule of the Pharisaic resurrection faith through the vehicle of such a story would be an horrendous tactic.

Such a background would help to explain why Jesus' reply appears so abrupt (Mk. 12:24a, 27b) towards those who appear to take Israel's theological heritage so lightly. It is also interesting that the account of the martyrs in 4 Maccabees has an affinity with Jesus' reply, in that they strengthen each other with the hope that, if they die, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will welcome them (4 Mac. 13:17, *cf.* Mk. 12:26).

However, apart from the number of brothers, and the association with the resurrection, there are not many other links between these stories. Perhaps the fatal difference between the two is the lack of any reference to marriage in the Maccabean tale; after all, a mother of seven is not a wife of seven; a martyrdom is not a marriage. Although the story and all its connotations may still be evoked to some degree for the discerning hearer, perhaps the Sadducees' case study is derived from another place.

II. Tobit

After stating that the 'seven' is simply a round number, Pesch commends the consideration of the possibility that the story may have been inspired by the Book of Tobit, although he does not take this suggestion any further himself.[16] Lane also endorses the possibility that 'the story may have been adapted from a popular version of the book of Tobit,'[17] without further exploration of this idea.

Generally dated around 200 BC,[18] Tobit was apparently also a widespread and influential book.[19] It

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(Goldstein, *Maccabees*, 83, dates it between 78/7–63 B.C.E.). Placing it during the reign of Agrippa I (41–44 C.E.), as proposed by S. Zeitlin, *The Second Book of Maccabees* (S. Tedesche, transl.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954) 27–31, would indicate the continued influence of Jason's version.

[12]'Clearly [4 Maccabees] is intended to persuade and move its readers to consider the virtuous Jews as models for their own attitudes toward unjust rulers (*cf.* 18:1–2). If it was composed in the mid-first century, then the increasing tensions with Rome, at least in Palestine, would have given the accounts contemporary relevance,' R.D. Young, 'The "Woman with the Soul of Abraham": Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs', *"Women Like This". New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (A.-J. Levine, ed.; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991) 73.

[13]Y.M. Grintz, 'Maccabees, Second Book of', *EncJ* 11: 659; U. Rappaport, 'Jason of Cyrene', *EncJ* 9: 1291.

[14]The final brother 'recalls the Law of Moses, the covenant with Abraham and the promise of resurrection which by now it is understood to entail, and he casts the children's deaths in sacrificial terms,' Young, '"Woman"', 72.

[15]Young, '"Woman"', 69.

[16]'ob Tob 3,8.15; 6,13; 7,11 die Erzählung inspirierte, kann erwogen werden', Pesch, *Markus*, II.232. Van Iersel, *Reading Mark* (Edinburgh, 1989) 151, likens the two stories.

[17]Lane, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, 1974) 427.

[18]D.E. Gowan, *Bridge Between the Testaments. A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity* (Pittsburgh Theological Monographs 14; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976) 354.

[19]'One of the most widely read books of pious fiction among ancient Jews,' holding 'a position in Jewish households similar to that once

contains the story of Sarah, who is afflicted with a demon, a 'monster of the bridal chamber'.[20] By the time the hero, Tobias, sets his intentions upon marrying her, seven of her husbands have already been killed on their wedding night (Tob. 3:8-9, 6:13-15, 7:11). Although this story has immediate contact with that of the Sadducees in that both concern the sevenfold loss of a woman's husbands, it also appears at first glance to have several differences: the Sadducees' tale spoke of 'brothers', assumed the context of Levirate marriage, and ridiculed the notion of resurrection, all of which seem fairly remote from Sarah's tale. However, a closer inspection also reveals closer connections.

1. Levirate Marriage and 'Brothers'

Tobit is a tale that assumes and illustrates the Levirate marriage practice. In fact, the book is dominated by this concern. One of the vehicles used to convey this important kinship theme is the multiple use of 'brother' (ἀδελφός).[21] Quite clearly in the book this word is used more broadly than for brothers-from-the-same-mother.

held by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in our own,' Metzger, *Introduction*, 31, 40. He does not provide the evidence for these statements.

[20]Although this title is that of the folklorists Aarne-Thompson (Type 507B), whose classification is adopted by F. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit. An English Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Dropsie College Jewish Apocryphal Literature; New York: Harper, 1958) 5-12, and P. Deselaers, *Das Buch Tobit. Studien zu seiner Entstehung, Komposition und Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1982) 281–92, it is used here descriptively and merely for convenience without implying anything regarding underlying sources. For a critique of an uncritical use of the Aarne-Thompson classification see W. Soll, 'Tobit and Folklore Studies, with Emphasis on Propp's Morphology', in *SBL Seminar 1988 Papers* (D.J. Lull, ed.; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 39–53; 'Misfortune and Exile in Tobit: The Juncture of a Fairy Tale Source and Deuteronomic Theology', *CBQ* 51 (1989) 209–231.

[21]Across the two texts (S, BA) there are 54 uses of ἀδελφός: 1:3, 5 S, 10, 14, 16, 21; 2:2, 3 S, 10 S; 3:15; 4:12, 13, 13; 5:5 S, 6, 8 S, 9 S, 10, 10 S, 11 S, 12, 12, 13, 13S, 13, 13, 13, 15 S, 16 S; 6:6, 10, 12 S, 12 S, 13, 15, 17 S; 7:1 S, 1 S, 1 S, 2 S, 3, 4, 7 S, 8, 10 S, 11 S, 12; 9:2, 10:6 S, 13, 11:2, 17; 14:4, 7. *Cf.* the congruent uses of ἀδελφή discussed below.

The two major tasks that drive the plot of the story are the need to save Tobit from his blindness and Sarah from the childlessness caused by her demonic oppression. To achieve these goals, Tobias must marry within his kin. Tobit, who tells the reader that he married 'Anna, a woman of the stock of our own family' (γυναῖκα ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος τῆς πατριᾶς ἡμῶν, 1:9), warns his son of the need to marry likewise within the family, following the precedent of Noah and the patriarchs (4:12 BA). The angel Raphael, disguised as a kinsman himself, later reminds Tobias of this responsibility (6:15).

Meanwhile, Sarah's problem is clearly presented as having no child, and no potential 'near kinsman' (ἀδελφὸς ἐγγύς, 3:15) to redeem her. We first hear of her affliction when she suffers the abuse of one of her father's servant girls. The narrator tells us she had to endure this humiliation

> for she had been married to seven husbands, and Asmodeus, the Evil Demon, had killed them off before they had been with her as is appointed for women (Tob. 3:8a).
>
> διότι ἦν ἐκδεδομένη ἀνδράσιν ἑπτά, καὶ Ασμοδαῖος τὸ δαιμόνιον τὸ πονηρὸν ἀπέκτεννεν αὐτοὺς πρὶν ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτοὺς μετ' αὐτῆς, καθάπερ ἀποδεδειγμένον ἐστὶν ταῖς γυναιξίν.

Zimmermann comments that the seven is probably a symbolic number, illustrating 'the hopelessness of Sarah's status. She was completely at the mercy of Asmodeus.'[22] He comments further:

> In the later rabbinic thought, a woman who had buried three husbands was called a *qatlanit*[23] as if there were something in her that was man-killing. Cf. Yeb. 64b: if a woman is married to one husband, and he dies; to a second, and he dies; she should not be married to a third. Such is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Simon ben Gamaliel avers, 'She may be married to a third, but not married to a fourth.' R. Huna declares 'The source is the cause' *i.e.*, such is the nature of this woman. R. Ashi says, 'It is her evil fortune.'

[22]Zimmermann, *Tobit*, 62; *cf.* Is. 4:1.

[23][*i.e.* one who kills].

Returning to the story: the words of the servant girl are then reported, as follows:

> *You* are the one who kills off your husbands! Behold, you have been wedded to seven husbands, and you have not borne the name of one of them. Why do you vex us for husbands of yours, because they died? Go with them! So we won't ever see a son or daughter of yours! (Tob. 3:8b-9, Zimmermann).
>
> Σὺ εἶ ἡ ἀποκτέννουσα τοὺς ἄνδρας σου. ἰδοὺ ἤδη ἀπεκδέδοσαι ἑπτὰ ἀνδράσιν καὶ ἑνὸς αὐτῶν οὐκ ὠνομάσθης. τί ἡμᾶς μαστιγοῖς περὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν σου, ὅτι ἀπέθανον; βάδιζε μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ μὴ ἴδοιμεν υἱόν σου μηδὲ θυγατέρα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Instead of 'not [bearing] the name' meaning that the woman has not been married,[24] it seems better to understand this in connection with the real problem of the story: she is a widow who needs redemption so that seed may be raised up for her dead husband(s), *i.e.* seven have died without children—there appears to be no hope that their name will live on (*cf.* Dt. 25:6, 7).

Tobias, her potential rescuer, is cast as a kinsman-redeemer. Raphael tells him

> you are her nearest-than-all-men to inherit her, and to legitimately inherit the things belonging to her father.
>
> καὶ σὺ ἔγγιστα αὐτῆς εἶ παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους κληρονομῆσαι αὐτήν καὶ τὰ ὄντα τῷ πατρὶ αὐτῆς σοὶ δικαιοῦται κληρονομῆσαι.[25] (6:12 S, cf. also 6:13).

Zimmermann comments

> The Gk. strikingly 'to inherit her' because of the gradual disclosure that Tobias is obligated to marry Sarah because he is the surviving kinsman, and as levir, for such he is,

[24]Zimmermann, *Tobit*, 63, referring to Is. 4:1 and the practice of a wife carrying the husband's name, *e.g.* Judg. 4:17.

[25]The other text focuses only upon him inheriting what will come to Sarah, rather than Sarah herself:. . .ὅτι σοὶ ἐπιβάλλει ἡ κληρονομία αὐτῆς (6:12 BA).

> according to the conception of his function in Tobit, he is duty-bound to marry her and no one else. [. . .] We now see the poignancy of Sarah's plight. Her past seems black without redemption, and her future without hope. She has killed off seven husbands, and there is no surviving levir (apparently) to marry her. [. . .cf.] (6:15). Tobias accordingly appears in the role of a double rescuer. He not only saves her from the demon, but in his person as a levir, he is the only living surviving kinsman who can 'inherit' her to marry her. Were she to be married to another man aside from Tobias, she would be guilty of *zenunim*, a violation of the law of Moses and punishable by death.[26] [cf. 6:13]

Tobias himself recognises his status when he expresses his concern to Raphael, having heard of Sarah's ailment:

> "Brother Azariah, I have heard that the maiden was already given to seven men, but they died in the marriage chamber. The very night they went in to her, they died. Moreover, I have heard people say that a demon slays them. Now then, I am an only child to my father, and I am afraid were I to go in, I would die just as the previous ones, because he does not wrong her, but whoever wishes to come near (ἐγγίσαι) to her, he kills him." (Tob. 6:14-15)

The last phrase is not in the BA text preferred by Zimmermann at this point.[27] However, given the importance of the kinsman redeemer motif in the Book of Tobit, the S text makes good sense as well as providing a vocabulary link with this motif (through 'to come near', ἐγγίσαι, *cf.* 3:15, 6:12, 13). Every person who has attempted 'to come near' to her, *i.e.* every

[26]Zimmermann, *Tobit*, 82-83. The point can be taken even though 'to inherit her' may simply mean to inherit what is hers, as the same phrase clearly means at 3:15, and as the BA text evidently takes it (see previous note).

[27]Zimmermann, *Tobit*, 155, suggests v. 15 has suffered dislocation in the S text and so takes over the BA text bodily. However, the principle of the more difficult reading would endorse the S reading with its internal parenthesis. The parenthesis then explains the reasons for Tobias' fear, and the main sentence reveals the content of his fear, namely, that his own line would be snuffed out with him. Ultimately, however, both readings are patent of the interpretation offered here.

person who has attempted to redeem her, has been killed. Asmodeus is cast as the one who kills the kinsman redeemer. The demon is directly antagonistic to the furtherance of Sarah's line.

Tobias is contemplating acting as a kinsman redeemer, where others have failed in the very process of fulfilling their kinsman redeemer's role. This catches him between two responsibilities: since he is an only son, to redeem his kinsman's name through Sarah will be at the risk of losing his own father's name! This is his great fear. This is confirmed by the narrator's comment that Tobias was comforted when he heard that 'she is to him a sister from the seed of his father's house' (ἔστιν αὐτῷ ἀδελφὴ ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, 6:19). Thus strengthened, Tobias sets his mind upon having her as his wife, despite her problems.

The kinship theme is also present when Tobias stresses that he does not take Sarah, his sister, out of πορνεία (8:7). Rather than meaning that he does not act out of 'lust', as it is usually taken (*cf.* NEB), this ought to be understood in terms of Tobias' commitment to not taking someone from a prohibited degree,[28] *i.e.* outside the kinship ties.[29] This is confirmed by the clear contrast drawn by Tobit between πορνεία and the taking of a wife within kinship ties (4:12 BA). On the wedding night, Tobias is rejoicing that he has done what his father has commanded (8:7). The fact that he embraces the possibility of his own death in order to fulfil this family obligation makes his action all the more noble when set against the norms of the story.

[28]*Cf.* Zimmermann's comment, (pp. 82-83, cited above) on Sarah's potential for being guilty of *zenunim* = adultery, Ho. 2:4 (LXX ~~porneiva~~).

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[29]Although the commentators do not discuss this possibility, this was certainly a usage in later times (*cf.* the discussion on the Rabbinics and on the apostolic decrees, Acts 15:20, 29, 21:25 in F. Hauck & S. Schultz, 'πόρνη κτλ', *TDNT* VI:589–90, 592–93) and it seems to make good sense in this context. The likelihood may be strengthened given Tobit's stress on kinship marriage and faithfulness to God on the one hand, and the OT link between unfaithfulness and idolatry as harlotry on the other (Hauck & Schultz, 'πόρνη κτλ', 588).

The book stresses Tobias' kinship with Sarah over and again. His fears were calmed and his love aroused by the news of their kinship (6:19 S). Like Tobit (5:21 BA, 10:6 S) and Raguel (7:15), Tobias calls his wife his 'sister' (ἀδελφή, (7:9 S, 8:4, 7).[30] Raguel also calls Sarah Tobias' sister (7:12 S) and describes their marriage by saying 'from now on you are her brother and she is your sister' (7:12) and affirms that both he and Edna are parents to Tobias just as they are to 'his sister' (8:21 S). Edna calls Tobias her brother (10:13) and reiterates her husband's statement that from now on she is Tobias' mother and Sarah is his sister (10:13 S).

The kinship theme is also supported by the vocabulary of 'offspring' (σπέρμα, 1:1, 9, 4:12 BA, 6:19 S, 8:6, 13:17 S) and 'name' (ὄνομα). For the latter, Sarah is mocked for not bearing the name of seven husbands (3:8), yet she refuses to humiliate her father (3:10). She cannot raise a name through a child, but she has not besmirched her own name—through defiling herself with men—and she will not raise a name that humiliates her father through her suicide (3:11-15). Clearly, for her the only proper way to raise a name is through bearing a child.[31]

Thus, to sum up so far, the concern of the Sadducees' case study for brothers and Levirate marriage *is exactly the same concern as that of the book of Tobit*. In fact, since the loss of the seven 'brothers' in the context of Levirate practice is central to Tobit's story, an allusion to them would be an ideal way to evoke the entire message of the book. Is this what the Sadducees were doing?

2. The Resurrection Question

But what of the resurrection question, especially since some find no resurrection notion in Tobit? Nickelsburg, for example,

[30]Bow & Nickelsburg suggest that this may be an implied comparison with Abraham's wife Sarah (Gn. 12:11–19). Note other parallels: their name; their childlessness; their confrontation with maids (Gn. 16:4, 6; *cf.* Tob. 3:7–9); their 'reproach' *cf.* barrenness (*e.g.* Gn. 30:23; Lk. 1:25); B. Bow, & G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Patriarchy with a Twist: Men and Women in Tobit', in Levine (ed.), *"Women"*, 139.

[31]*Cf.* 1:9 S where Tobit raises a name for himself in Tobias, and his desire to know Raphael's lineage and his name (5:12).

argues that for Tobit, the traditional two-ways schema is used in the belief that one's reward is received in this lifetime, and death is when 'one descends permanently to Sheol, "the eternal place" (3:6, 10).'[32] He contrasts this with the Epistle of Enoch which agrees that the righteous might descend to Sheol with grief (102:5), but overcomes the theodicy problem 'by positing a resurrection that will permit the kind of exchange in fortune that Tobit must experience *before* he dies (103:1-4).'[33] He explains the importance of burial to Tobit in this light, since burial is the conclusion to one's life (Tob. 14:11–13, *cf.* 1 Enoch 103:5–8).

However, closer inspection reveals that Tobit has more to contribute to the resurrection question than first meets the eye. The Book is clearly concerned with the issue of bringing life where there was death.

(1) Tobit and Sarah. Tobit's practice of burying his dead brethren has a prominent place in the story (1:17ff.; 2:3 ff.). He understands the need for him to keep burying his countrymen in terms of Amos 8:10 (2:6): in exile even their feasting is continually interrupted with mourning. He risks his own death in order to bury the dead (2:8).

The burial of the dead leads directly to Tobit's blindness (2:9 ff.), which is itself regarded as a living death. As he puts it:

> What joy can I have any more? I, a man without power of eyesight! I cannot see the light of heaven, but I lie in darkness like the dead who do not see the light any more. Living, I am among the dead! I hear the voice of men, yet I cannot see them (5:10).[34]

[32]G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Tobit and Enoch: Distant Cousins with a Recognizable Resemblance', Lull (ed.), 64. However, when Tobit prays that he might die, along with asking that he might become earth (3:6) and saying 'release me to the eternal place' (ἀπόλυσόν με εἰς τὸν τόπον αἰώνιον) he also adds 'and do not turn your face away, O Lord, from me' (καὶ μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, κύριε, ἀπ' ἐμοῦ), which will be for him a greater profit than to continue to live. This latter phrase throws into question whether the 'eternal place' is simply Sheol.

[33]Nickelsburg, 'Tobit and Enoch', 65.

[34]This would be reinforced if A.-J. Levine, 'Diaspora as Metaphor: Bodies and Boundaries in the Book of Tobit', *Diaspora Jews and*

Sarah's problem is not only directly concerned with death through being a husband killer, but also indirectly—and perhaps more importantly in view of the concern of the book as a whole—in that she is unable to raise up seed to ensure her father's name continues in Israel. In this sense, she is death for her line. It is also possible that, just like Raguel faces the death penalty if he gives Sarah to any but Tobias (6:13), Sarah, too, faces it if she marries anyone other than a kinsman.[35] Sarah's living death is brought out when her maids tell her to go with her dead husbands (3:8b–9).

In addition, Tobit and Sarah are both driven by their afflictions to cry out to the Lord that they might die, rather than continuing to be the 'living dead'. In this sense as well, when Tobias saves them, he is therefore bringing life to the (potentially) dead. Thus the completion of the two main tasks of the book are cast as the bringing of life where there was death.

(2) Tobias. Tobias' journey is begun because of Tobit's desire for death (4:1-2), and is shrouded with death since he is charged to bury his parents properly (4:3-4). When he is sent on his journey by his father, Anna thinks he has gone to his death and so she mourns him, as someone who mourns her only son (10:7, *cf.* Am. 8:10).

There are overtones of death in Raguel's exhortation that Tobias 'eat, drink and be merry this night', (φάγε καὶ πίε καὶ ἡδέως γενοῦ τὴν νύκτα ταύτην, 7:10) since he has already seen seven die on the night of the wedding (7:11). His exhortation is reminiscent of a proverbial phrase which set these three elements against the backdrop of a certain (and often imminent) death. The proverb not only had a widespread and long-lasting currency in the ancient world,[36] but was also

Judaism. Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel (J. Overman, & R. MacLennan, eds.; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 109, correctly associates blindness with a concern for the 'boundary' between, amongst other things, life and death.

[35]See the comments by Zimmermann referred to above.

[36]*Epigr. Graec.* 344.3: γνῶθι τέλος βιότου. διὸ παῖζε τρυφῶν ἐπὶ κόσμῳ, 'know the end of life. Wherefore sport and revel on earth'. Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.78, tells of the Egyptian practice of carrying coffins into drinking bouts while proclaiming the words 'drink and make merry, but look

represented in the Biblical tradition (Isa. 22:13). Given the proverbial nature of 'eat and drink and take pleasure', Tobit's exhortation would be readily completed by the hearer '. . .for soon you will die'.

Raguel certainly holds little hope for Tobias' survival, as the story proceeds to show with its macabre scene of the grave being dug in the backyard while the newlyweds sleep inside the house (8:10–11). This further illustrates the nature of the task before Tobias. As Sarah's near relative he is obligated to marry her, but, at least in the mind of her father, this obligation will mean certain death. Like the righteous man Tobit went blind in order to bury his fellow Israelite, so too his righteous son will risk his own death in order to redeem his fellow Israelite's name. When they sit down to 'eat and drink' (7:14) the mood of the story is ominous. Her parents hold no hope and her bridal chamber is decked with tears (7:15–17; *cf.* Am. 8:10). When the eating is complete, it seems like Tobias' death is even closer (8:1), so close that the grave must be dug (8:10). However, despite the ominous expectation of his death, we learn that he is saved (8:14) and God is praised for his mercy: Raguel's reproach has been removed, mercy and

on this; for such shalt thou be when thou art dead'. Euripides, *Alc.* 780–89, has Heracles proclaim: 'From all mankind the debt of death is due, nor of all mortals is there one that knows if through the coming morrow he shall live,. . .this hearing then, and learning it from me, make merry, drink: the life from day to day account thine own, all else in fortune's power'. *Cf.* the similar wisdom found in inscriptions on drinking cups: ἐφ' ὃ πάρει; εὐφραίνου 'wherefore art thou here? Make merry!', A. Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East* (L.R.M. Strachan, transl.; ed. 4; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927) 129–31. The phrase 'to eat and drink' was used to sum up the Epicurean philosophy by Plutarch (*cf. non posse suaviter* 1098C; 1100D; *adv. Colotem* 1125D) and others (*cf.* A. Malherbe, 'The Beasts at Ephesus', *JBL* 87 [1968] 76). The grave of the legendary Assyrian king, Sardanapal (*cf.* W. Röllig, 'Sardanapal', *Der kleine Pauly* 4:1550–51), who for the ancient world became the epitome of the Epicurean philosophy, apparently bore the inscription ἔσθιε, πῖνε, παῖζε and possibly even went on to say 'knowing full well that thou art but mortal, indulge thy desire, find joy in thy feasts. Dead, thou shalt have no delight,' (Malherbe, 'Beasts', 76-77); *cf.* Plutarch, *Alex. fort. virt.* 330F; 336C. ἔσθιε, πῖνε, ἀφροδισιάζε: τἄλλα δ' οὐδέν, 'eat drink, sport with love; all else is nought'. See also Horatius, *Carm.* 1.4; 2.3; *1 Cor* 15:32.

salvation have been shown to Tobias and Sarah (8:17)! In a very real sense, Tobias himself is delivered from death.

In addition to facing physical death, Tobias threatens to bring death to his line by marrying Sarah. He must go to the jaws of death in order to bring life, not only to Sarah's line, but to his own. If he does not succeed, his parents too will go to their graves in grief, and, what's more, with no-one to bury them (6:15). Couple this with Anna's fear that Tobias is dead (10:3ff.), and it becomes clear that Tobias not only raises his parents and Sarah from the dead in the course of the story, but is himself 'raised from the dead'.

Thus as the story unfolds, Tobias rescues his parents from the death of their line and the prospect of a death without burial; Tobit from the living death of blindness; Sarah and her household from the demon of death that brought death to their line; and Raguel from the potential death penalty for giving his daughter to someone else; and all this through being rescued from death himself.

(3) **The Ethical Teaching.** The ethical teaching of the book, especially that on alms-giving, has often been regarded as an important indicator of the book's purpose. However, it ought to be recognised that even this ethical teaching is set within a 'resurrection' context. For example, Tobit tells Tobias that as a person gives alms, 'you store up a good credit for yourself against the day of necessity. For alms deliver from death, and allow not descent to Darkness,' (4:9-10). This is reinforced by the angel Raphael who avers that almsgiving not only purges away sin, leading to life to the full, but also delivers from death (12:9).[37]

[37]In fact, the entire 'moral' section may express more of an eschatological outlook than is usually recognised, *cf.* the promise of reward from the Lord (4:14) vs. the Lord humbling to Hades below (4:19). This perspective is hinted at elsewhere: *e.g.* they are to bless God into eternity (12:17); 'blessed be the living God into eternity and his kingdom!' (13:1); 'He chastises, then shows mercy; He leads down to Hades below the earth, but He delivers from the great destruction (13:2)'.

(4) Tobit and the Greek Reader. Tobit was most probably directed toward an audience familiar to some degree with Greek culture. As Di Lella puts it:

> [Tobit] is nomic literature in narrative form that gave meaning and hope to Jews living in the confused and confusing society of Hellenistic times. The pervasive and spiritually pernicious impact of Hellenism was being felt even by pious believers [through] the beauty and modernity of Hellenistic culture and art, of customs and religion.[38]

For such readers Tobit's association with 'resurrection' would be enhanced by the similarities it shares with the Greek Legend of Admetus, which Glasson proposed to be its source.[39] The story not only tells of Admetus entering the bridal chamber of Alcestis to find the snakes of Artemis in the marriage chamber, but apparently also portrayed Alcestis voluntarily dying to rescue Admetus from death, and subsequently being sent back from the underworld (Apollodorus, *Library* I.ix.15).

(5) The Theological Purpose of Tobit. Thus the internal workings of the story show quite a concern with 'resurrection', even if this resurrection is symbolic or metaphorical, rather than physical or actual. But there is still more to say on this theme. Not only is this concern evident in the internal dynamics of the story, but when the overall purpose of the book of Tobit is set within its theological context, it becomes clear that this 'resurrection' theme is profoundly important to the message of the book.[40]

i. Tobit's Theological Purpose. Most scholars agree that Tobit has a setting in the eastern Diaspora.[41] Although many find the

[38]A. Di Lella, 'The Deuteronomistic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tobit 14:3-11', *CBQ* 41 (1979) 388.
[39]T.F. Glasson, 'The Main Source of Tobit', *ZAW* 71 (1959) 275–77.
[40]This article therefore endorses the recent trends which attempt 'to tie more closely the message of the book to its overall structure,' R. Doran, 'Narrative Literature', *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg, eds.; Philadelphia & Atlanta: Fortress & Scholars, 1986) 298, through proposing a more theological understanding of the book's message.
[41]The options are summarised by Doran, 'Literature', 299: Eastern diaspora: Lebram, Grintz, Nickelsburg; Antioch: Zimmermann;

historicity of its contents suspect, it is nevertheless agreed that 'the book does have another kind of historical value as a testimony to the way Judaism responded to the realities of life in the Diaspora.'[42] This response is often discussed merely in terms of 'dispersion ideals',[43] or pious behaviour, as evidenced by the various purposes suggested for Tobit (see below). However, it should not be forgotten that one of the ways Judaism 'responded to the realities of life in the Diaspora' was to respond *theologically*,[44] that is, to rely on, to reiterate and to build upon the hopes erected by her prophetic heritage. It is against this theological context that Tobit ought to be understood.

It is more than a 'sapiential story' merely being interested in 'proper human behaviour'.[45] It is not simply

> intended to provide religious and moral instruction in the form of an adventure story. The chief lesson which it conveys is that God in his mysterious providence, though permitting various calamities to befall those who are righteous, at the same time exercises a special care over them in the midst of their sufferings and grants them a happy ending to all their trials.[46]

Nor does it simply intend

> to tell, through the misfortune and eventual redemption of Tobit and the adventures of his son in finding a bride in

Samaria and Galilee: Milik; Jerusalem: R.H. Pfeiffer; Alexandria, expanded in Jerusalem, then again in Alexandria, then finally Jerusalem: Deselaers.
[42]Gowan, *Bridge*, 354.
[43]Metzger, *Introduction*, 37.
[44]'For some Jews of the postbiblical period the Dispersion continued to be a theological problem, and a massive return from the Dispersion, often portrayed in the language of Second and Third Isaiah, became a standard item in descriptions of the end-time,' G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah. A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 17.
[45]Nickelsburg, 'Tobit and Enoch', 62.
[46]Metzger, *Introduction*, 31.

> Media, how piety and faithfulness to the God of Israel enable one to triumph over ills both natural and supernatural.[47]

Although it is true, with Glasson, to say that the story is primarily about the marriage of Tobias and Sarah and the overcoming of the demon,[48] this also needs to be set in the wider theological context of the book.

Deselaers, concentrating on the terms *hodos*, *eleemosynai*, *eulogein*, argues that these terms have sociological implications bound up with maintaining the family, kin, and people together as well as being related to God's dealings. From this he draws the conclusion that the author is stressing that there is no barrier between humanity and God.[49] But these data need to be placed in a more profound theological context, and any theological statements arising from them should not be cast in such general terms, but should be shaped by the prophetic heritage of Israel.

This appropriate theological context is approached most closely by Nickelsburg, who regards the teaching of that which constitutes a pious life as only a secondary purpose. After noting the movement from piety to blessing, he states that the primary purpose of the work is to assure its readers that God is with them even in dispersion and that he will bring them back together.[50] In other words, Tobit encourages its readers to believe that the hopes of the prophets would be fulfilled (14:4, cf. 15). He does this explicitly (14:4), stating that the exile will cease one day (14:5) and the nations will turn from their idolatry (14:6); but he also does it in story form, illustrating that the nation that is theologically dead will one day be raised from the dead.

ii. Tobit and the Exile. Although questions have been raised about the originality of the last two chapters, a good number of

[47]Gowan, *Bridge*, 353.
[48]Glasson, 'Source', 275–77.
[49]As summarized by Doran, 'Literature', 298.
[50]G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times', *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (M.E. Stone, ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 33–87.

scholars support the book's unity.[51] These last chapters help to anchor the story of the book in the theological life-setting for which it has relevance.

> When we notice that the exile is the enduring misfortune underlying the particular misfortunes that are resolved in the Tobit narrative, the unity of the work impresses itself more forcibly on us. [. . .] chaps. 13–14 are not merely tacked on, but are necessary in view of the way the author has portrayed the initial situation as one of exile and has explicitly connected the villainies or lacks that befall the Tobit family to that exile. It is in these last chapters that the prospect of an end to that exile is held out.[52]

Despite the narrative setting of the book being the Assyrian dispersion, and the fact that Nineveh 'is sufficiently remote in time to serve as a symbol for the current exilic situation anywhere in the diaspora',[53] these final chapters reveal that this setting is used as a vehicle to picture the situation which prevailed for Israel after the Babylonian exile:[54]

> the fate of the nation is of great concern to the author of Tobit, and he speaks almost exclusively of it in the last two chapters, [which] suggests that the author's application of it to Tobit's own suffering is secondary and that the problem of Exile and Dispersion and the hope for a regathering of the people are foremost in his mind. This return from Dispersion will have as its focus proper pan-Israelite worship in a Jerusalem rebuilt according to the promises of Isaiah 54 and 60 (13:9–18; 14:5). In his testamentary forecast (14:4-7) Tobit envisages the Babylonian Exile, the Return, the rebuilding of

[51]Gowan, *Bridge*, 354. Zimmermann is in the minority, arguing that 13 and 14 were later additions. However, the presence of all 14 chapters at Qumran discredits some of his arguments; Doran, 'Literature', 297.
[52]Soll, 'Misfortune', 230.
[53]Soll, 'Misfortune', 230. He refers to the work of J. Lebram and D. Flusser who isolate the sequence of kingdoms in Tobit as a rudimentary form of what became the four empires motif in Daniel.
[54]This may gain extra support if Torrey is right that at the time of writing Nineveh was identified with Seleucia (*cf.* 'Ashur is Seleucia', *Yoma* 10 a; *Kethuboth* 10 b), and the writer was a Babylonian Jew, C.C. Torrey, '"Nineveh" in the Book of Tobit', *JBL* 41 (1922) 243–45.

> the Temple, and then in the end-time the rebuilding of a glorious Jerusalem and the conversion of the Gentiles.[55]

The writer of Tobit evidently applied Israel's theological heritage to his own situation. Several studies have identified Deuteronomistic influence in Tobit,[56] claiming 'that the author. . .shared many of the same intentions of the final redactors of Deuteronomy, viz., encouragement of the depressed people and exhortation to remain true to the faith,'[57] and that the Deuteronomic theology is invoked to interpret the situation of exile.[58] Tobit's author was 'a perceptive student of Israel's ancient heritage' who employed the Deuteronomistic theology of history to show that the disasters of the nation were due to the people's infidelity[59] which lead them into idolatry. That he draws upon the theological heritage of the prophets is also fairly obvious.

The elements of Tobit's narrative are explicitly cast against this exilic situation. Tobit himself may represent Israel in temporary exile.[60] When he prays for death he catches himself up in the exile (3:4), identifying himself with wayward Israel, even though personally innocent.[61] When the exilic prophets spoke of Israel's plight they used a conventional description of the unfaithful community[62] by referring to Israel's blindness. Israel is blind (Is. 35:5, 41:7, 18–22), not only because he has not listened to his God, but because he has served other gods (Is. 44:9, 18). Israel's blindness is thus linked with his idolatry. As for Tobit, he recognises Israel as idolatrous and himself as innocent (chap. 1), and yet he is so caught up in the exile of his people that he too becomes blind.

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[55]Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 33–34, referring to 3:4-5, 13:2, 5, 9; 13:14; 14:5 cf. Ps. 89:32–34; *Ps. Sol.* 7:8–10; 10:1–4; 18:4–7; Wis. 12:22.
[56]Di Lella, 'Background'; Soll, 'Misfortune'.
[57]Di Lella, 'Background', 380-81.
[58]Soll, 'Misfortune', 221.
[59]Di Lella, 'Background', 388.
[60]Levine, 'Diaspora', 113–14. In particular, she interprets the theme of uncleanness against this backdrop, with Nowell's unpublished dissertation.
[61]Soll, 'Misfortune', 224.
[62]Levine, 'Diaspora', 113.

On the other hand, just like the prophets promised that God would make blind Israel see once again (e.g. Is. 35:5, 42:7), so Tobit finds salvation through the restoration of his sight.

Sarah's prayer likewise refers to her exile (3:15), and Soll speculates how Sarah's demonic affliction may also be associated with exile:

> Polytheism presumed the local jurisdiction of gods; some Jews may have retained this notion in regard to demons. It is plausible that the author of Tobit thought that exile made Jewish young women vulnerable to evils of this kind.[63]

Levine builds upon this speculation to say that 'Sarah represents what could be [the covenant community's] fate in the diaspora: ignorant, childless and in the undesired embrace of idolatry represented by a demon.'[64]

However, the link may be even more profound. The LXX forges an integral link between the idolatry that caused Israel's exile and the demonic. This was a link which was perfectly obvious to the Greek world—in fact, necessary, since the gods must keep their distance from this world and it was therefore right that the intermediate beings, (*i.e.* the 'daemons') serviced the idols instead of them.[65] The LXX, written for this world, on several occasions, sometimes even extending the MT, associates Israel's idolatry with demonic worship (Dt. 32:16–17;[66] Pss. 96 [LXX 95]:5; 106 [LXX 105]:37–38; Is. 65:3,[67] 11) and directly links the exile with this demonic worship (Dt. 32; Ps. 106 [LXX 105], ?Is. 65).

This connection between idolatry and the demons is continued in later Jewish writings, as is the connection between this demonic worship and the exile. So, for example, in Baruch,

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[63]Soll, 'Misfortune', 225.
[64]Levine, 'Diaspora', 112.
[65]See for example, the classic discussion by Plutarch in *De defectu*. Paul was well aware of this connection (1 Cor. 10:20–21).
[66]The Greek translator chooses not to render the Hebrew (which would require a relative clause), but instead makes the verse present a starker alternative: they sacrifice 'to the demonic [spirits], not to God'.
[67]The LXX addition ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν: appears to read in the Hebrew of Dt. 32:17.

which is itself an appeal for an end to exile (2:11ff., 3:1-8), both Israel's dead and living share in the guilt which caused the exile (3:3–4) and, consequently the living have been numbered with those that lie in the grave (3:10-11). This guilt was due to Israel, through sacrificing to foreign gods, sacrificing to demons (Ba. 4:7).[68] The promise is given that the exiles will return, leaving Babylon to her demons (4:27-37). (See further, 1 Enoch 19:1, Jub. 11:4ff.).

In view of this background, Sarah's affliction could well picture the exiles, not as being 'in the undesired embrace of idolatry represented by a demon,'[69] but as being afflicted with the demon of death as a consequence of their own worship of demons in the first place.[70]

And, of course, the notion that the exile is the death of Israel is also prevalent in the prophetic material, out of which the image of the 'resurrection' of the nation develops. Thus Ezekiel 37 portrays the exile and return metaphorically in terms of death and resurrection of the bones of the people of Israel. This would subsequently take on a much more literal expectation in the writings of Daniel (Dn. 12) and beyond. The writer of Tobit therefore has good prophetic precedent for constructing a story which makes such major use of the 'resurrection' metaphor.[71]

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[68]J.C. Dancy, *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 193. The similarity of Ba. 4:7 with Is. 65:3 is evident, as is the fact that the latter portion quotes directly Dt. 32:17 (LXX). D.G. Burke, *The Poetry of Baruch* (S&CS 10; Chico: Scholars, 1982) 158, points out that Ps. 106:37 makes it clear that it is not sacrifice in general but child sacrifice that is meant in all three verses.

[69]Levine, 'Diaspora', 112.

[70]This is a constant theme of the OT (*e.g.* Judg. 10:11–14); *cf.* Paul's argument in Romans 1, where people are given up by God to the consequences of what they in their sinfulness have already turned to.

[71]Further examination of Tobit may reveal even more interest in a resurrection theme. For example, the notion of inheriting the land according to the Abrahamic promises is linked with the need for taking a wife from amongst the kinfolk (4:12 BA), and the return from exile (14:7, *cf.* Is. 51:2 and also Dt. 1:8, 6:10, 30:20, 34:4, *cf.* 9:5, with Di Lella, 'Background', 381–82) and may have been understood in terms of resurrection at this stage. This was no doubt the case in 2 Mac. 7, where the final brother 'recalls the Law of Moses, the covenant with Abraham and the promise of resurrection which by now it is understood to entail,' Young, 72; *cf.* the later 4 Mac. 13:17, Romans 4.

Not only are blindness, demonic affliction and death associated with Israel's exilic plight, but so too is the notion of the kinsman redeemer who rescues him from that plight. The earlier notion of God as Israel's kinsman-redeemer (*e.g.* Ex. 15:13, Ps. 106:10) was taken up especially by the latter chapters of Isaiah.[72] God is Israel's near relative (44:14, 47:4 etc), and he will redeem Israel from the exile (43:1, 44:22-23, 52:9 etc.). In this way, the hope is generated that the Exile will be reversed by God once again playing his role as kinsman redeemer. In the theology of Isaiah, this rescue will come through the death and resurrection of the Servant of the Lord, *cf.* Tobias who embraces his (potential) death in order to redeem and is rescued from it.[73]

Thus, not only can the misfortunes of the book 'be seen as acute manifestations of the chronic condition of exile,'[74] but their resolution can also be seen as the reinforcement of the hopes generated by the exilic prophets that the exile would one day be reversed. Thus, the statements of the final chapters do no more than make explicit what is implicitly, but powerfully taught by the symbolism of the 'fairy story'; the two elements of the book thus working together in a harmonious unity. At the symbolic level, the fairy story does provide 'the ultimate model for the resolution of evil',[75] for, by uniting the Deuteronomistic concern for 'life and death' (*cf.* Dt. 30:19-20)[76] with the

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[72]R.C. Denton, 'Redeem, etc.', *IDB* 4:21–22.

[73]Interestingly, the book of Job links God as redeemer with the resurrection (Job 19:25). Although I haven't explored this any further, comparisons have been regularly drawn between Tobit and Job, see Levine, 'Diaspora', 113; Soll, 'Misfortune', 224; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 33.

[74]Soll, 'Misfortune', 222, 225.

[75]*Cf.* Soll, 'Misfortune', 230: 'For the author of Tobit and his audience in the Jewish diaspora, the fairy tale cannot provide the ultimate model for the resolution of evil. Yet the glimpse of joy it provides, and the implication that evil is not finally triumphant, makes the fairy tale a good kind of story to listen to, adapt, and tell while awaiting the destruction of "Nineveh"'.

[76]Di Lella, 'Background', 385–87.

prophetic images and expectations, it models God's concern, as Israel's kinsman redeemer, to bring life from the dead.

(6) Tobit, the Exile and the Resurrection. Despite the return to the land under Cyrus' patronage, it is clear that many considered that Israel was still in exile. In this theological setting, the book of Tobit is an example of a narrative which seeks to maintain the 'resurrection' hope of the prophets. Like Tobit (3:6, *cf.* 2:11-14) and Sarah (3:7-15, 8:10-11), exiled Israel may be suffering the reproaches of others (Tob. 3:4, Dt. 28:3, 1 Ki. 9:7),[77] but one day these will be gone. Like Tobit, Israel may be blind, but one day he will see. Like Sarah, Israel may be subject to a demon of death, but one day he will live again. Like Tobias, there will be a kinsman redeemer who will come, prepared to enter into the death of Israel in order to achieve Israel's 'resurrection'. Through his narrative the writer of Tobit draws upon Israel's theological heritage in order to maintain and encourage the expectation that God, the great kinsman redeemer, would bring a return from exile, restore the blind, heal the demon afflicted and reverse her barrenness, yes, and even raise the dead. If the exile brought mourning instead of joy (Am. 8:10, *cf.* Tob. 2:6, 7:15-17, 10:7), the writer of Tobit, through the medium of the 'eucastrophic' (*i.e.* turning disaster to joy) fairy tale, aids the recovery of joy amongst his contemporaries by the reinforcement of the hope of 'resurrection'.[78]

III. Return to the Sadducees' Question

It has become clear, then, that the stories of the seven brothers in the book of Tobit and the Sadducees' case study are much closer than at first sight. The suggestion of Pesch and Lane has been fruitfully pursued to a conclusion: the Sadducees are quite

[77]*Cf.* Soll, 'Misfortune', 226–28.

[78]Soll, 'Misfortune', 229. The importance of joy to the story (*cf.* 5:10, 11:15) has often been noticed.

probably primarily referring to the book of Tobit.[79] If so, what does this identification of their reading matter entail?

At the very least, it follows that there is no need to insist that the brothers in the Sadducees' case study need to be brothers from the same mother (as in 2 Mac. 7, for example). This should not be a great surprise, since Deuteronomy 25 itself allows for this wider understanding of the brother who acts as a levir, but Tobit provides confirmation. The Sadducees' case study may well be talking of seven brother Israelites, or seven brothers from the same tribe, rather than brothers from the same mother.

But given the allusion, still more can be said. If the Sadducees are alluding to Tobit, does this mean that the Pharisees discussed this particular story, not so much in terms of its implications for levirate law, but in terms of its implications for the resurrection hope that its message perpetuates? The Sadducees can then pick it up as, in their terms, a self-contradictory story, for how can the resurrection belief it encourages be held alongside the Levirate practice it illustrates?

It also seems logical that it would be the hope of the resurrection *of Israel* that is under discussion.[80] The Sadducees, as the politically advantaged, perhaps had no need of such hopes, especially if they were drawn from non-Mosaic teaching and reinforced by such contradictory case studies as that of Tobit. For the Pharisees, however, such hopes were a crucial part of their prophetic heritage and any rejection of

[79]Even if Tobit is the primary reference, it may be that the connotations are enriched by the Maccabean martyrs also being evoked. The reference to 'seven brothers' brings both stories into the reader's repertoire. The connotations from 2 Mac. 7 import the notion of resurrection to the readers mind. As the Sadducees add the information regarding the loss of the husbands, it fixes the allusion to Tobit. However, since Tobit also concerns resurrection (albeit at the symbolic level), the associations connoted by the Maccabean martyrs are not dismissed entirely.

[80]This can be compared to the similar story of a bridegroom dying on the wedding night which is clearly linked to the death of the nation in exile (2 Esd. 9–10).

them would deserve the kind of sharp rebuke that Jesus serves his opponents.

In addition, in view of the increasing recognition of the importance of intertextuality to the reading of a story, it is not enough simply to state that this is the background to the Sadducees' case study and take it no further. If it is, then their short allusion to the Tobit story will evoke much—or even all—of that story and it is therefore important to inquire after other features of the story that may be evoked and how such connotations, once recognised, nuance the reading of Mark. Mark shares many features in common with Tobit: both have characters who are blind, barren and demon-afflicted, and in both cases it could be said that these characters represent 'what could be [the covenant community's] fate in the diaspora: ignorant, childless and in the [. . .] embrace of idolatry represented by a demon.'[81] At the opening of Mark's story, Israel is still regarded as in exile; Israel is afflicted by demons; Israel is blind; Israel still awaits a kinsman redeemer and the fulfilment of the prophetic hopes of restoration and resurrection. If the Sadducees' case study evokes the story of Tobit, the question of what this adds to the repertoire of Mark's reader and so to the experience of reading Mark still awaits further fruitful exploration.[82]

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[81]Levine, 'Diaspora', 112, of Sarah. I have also removed 'undesired' from the citation for the reasons discussed above.

[82]This is the subject of part of my doctoral dissertation which is presently being researched at King's College, London.

Mark 13: An Apocalyptic Precursor to the Passion Narrative[1]

Mark 13, containing Jesus' 'apocalyptic (or eschatological) discourse' has provided interpreters with many difficulties. These interpretive difficulties revolve around the key, central verses which talk of the coming of the Son of man in the context of a great time of distress, followed by his sending out his angels to gather the elect from the corners of the earth (vv. 24-27).

At the heart of these verses lies a quotation from Dan 7:13 (v. 26). In his vision, Daniel had seen 'one like a Son of man' coming to the 'Ancient of Days' in the context of a judgement scene. His arrival signalled the end of all ungodly human power and, having come to the Ancient of Days,

> 'he was given authority, and glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom will never be destroyed' (Dan 7:14).

Since this description matches that of an earlier vision which spoke of the kingdom that would be set up by the God of heaven (cf. Dan 2:44), it seems that when this Son of man comes to the Ancient of Days he receives nothing short of the Kingdom of God. The rest of the chapter goes on to say that the people of God who are suffering on earth benefit from the Son of man's reception of the kingdom, for they too will share in the kingdom that is awarded to him (Dan 7:18, 22, 27).[2]

The issue in Mark 13 concerns the referent of this quotation. In Mark's view, what is this 'coming of the Son of man'? What does it refer to? What is (are) the event(s) in view in Mark 13:24-27?

Two answers are commonly given:

1. One possibility is that the coming of the Son of man refers to *the parousia*, i.e. the second coming of Christ which is an event still future both to the events recorded in Mark's Gospel and to Mark's readers (including, presumably, those in 1994).
2. Another possibility is that these verses refer to the *destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70*. In this case, the coming of the Son of man refers, in the first instance, to the vindication of Jesus in his resurrection/exaltation. But this vindicated glory is then powerfully manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem's temple some 40 years later, and the great time of mission which is said to have followed that event (to cope with v. 27). This expression of Jesus' vindicated glory in AD 70 is taken to be the main burden of Mark 13.[3]

Both positions have their exegetical problems, which can be played off against each other. Any or all of these exegetical problems would be fruitful areas for discussion, but my purpose is merely to allude to their existence, and to assert that the two common interpretations have problems sufficient to raise the question whether either alternative is correct. Having said as much, the plan of this paper is to raise two further questions about both positions, and, in the process of answering them, to unfold a third possibility for interpreting the verses in view.

Part A: Parousia, Temple and Resurrection In Mark's Gospel

The long history of Gospel studies has brought us to the position where the final form of the text of a Gospel is treated with great seriousness. Increasingly the Gospel of Mark is being considered holistically as a literary work with its own narrative dynamics, rhetorical purpose and means of persuading readers to that purpose.[4] When such a perspective is taken into account, two further questions can be asked of the common interpretations of Mark 13:24-27.

(1) Do they adequately consider Mark 13 as an integral part of Mark's story?

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1 This article summarises P. G. Bolt, The Narrative Integrity of Mk 13:24–27. (Unpublished MTh thesis; Australian College of Theology, Kensington, NSW, 1991).

2 The interpretation of Daniel 7 is by no means undisputed. This reading of the chapter develops that of W. J. Dumbrell, 'Daniel 7 and the Function of Old Testament Apocalyptic', *RefThR* 34/1 (1975), pp.16–23.

3 For the outline of this position see R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament. His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Tyndale, 1971; Baker reprint, 1982), pp.227–239; *Divine Government: God's Kingship in the Gospel of Mark* (London & Homebush West: SPCK & Lancer, 1990), pp.78–80.

4 This is certainly the trend at the moment, despite the occasional (and, in Räisänen's case, self-confessed) 'lonely protest', cf. J. C. Meagher, 'Die Form- und Redaktionsungeschickliche Methoden: The Principle of Clumsiness and the Gospel of Mark', *JAAR* 43/3 (1975), pp.459–472; *Clumsy Construction in Mark's Gospel. A Critique of Form- and Redaktionsgeschichte* (TST 3; New York: Mellen, 1979); and H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* (SNTW; C. Tuckett, transl.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976, ET 1990), or, more briefly, 'The "Messianic Secret" in Mark's Gospel (IRT 1; C. Tuckett, transl.; London & Philadelphia: SPCK & Fortress, 1983), pp.132–140.

(2) Is their assumption of an extratextual referent for verses 24-27 justified?

When considered from this holistic perspective the two usual interpretations share a common weakness. It is rare indeed to find an interpreter who attempts to understand Mark 13 in the literary context of Mark's Gospel. Why did Jesus talk about either the parousia or the destruction of Jerusalem at this point of his career?[5] How does this report of either the parousia or the destruction of the temple contribute to Mark's story which is still in progress by chapter 13?

It is not usual for scholars to even ask this contextual question. This may be the legacy of form critical studies which tended, not only to have little regard for the Gospel as a whole, but also to focus upon the content of Jesus' sayings at the expense of their context. In fact, it appears that T. J. Geddert's work, published in 1989, is the first serious attempt to read Mark 13 'carefully and comprehensively in the context of Mark's Gospel'.[6]

And yet this is how the chapter in its final form patently expects to be read. It is clearly cast as a continuation of the ongoing narrative. Verse 1 introduces the chapter by telling of Jesus' journey away from the temple, which, for the last two chapters, has been the scene of his controversy with his opponents. His apocalyptic discourse is launched (v. 4) by a two-part question from four disciples who are already well-known to us as characters within Mark's story. In other words, although this is almost never acknowledged, the discourse is first and foremost a narrated speech between Jesus and his four friends who all have a role to play in Mark's total story.[7] Other

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5 Conzelmann has drawn parallels with other genres which traditionally place an eschatological section at the end, reported in E. Schweizer, 'Eschatology in Mark's Gospel', *Neotestamentic et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black* (E. E. Ellis & M. Wilcox, eds.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), p.115. However, offering formal parallels is a long way from offering an explanation in terms of Mark's narrative. It could also be asked whether Mark 13 actually is at the end, like the formal parallels: what of chapters 14–16?

6 T. J. Geddert, *Watchwords. Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989). After surveying previous scholarship on the chapter he notes that 'one task ... has remained unfulfilled: the task of reading Mark 13 carefully and comprehensively in the context of Mark's Gospel' (p.18).

7 It is acknowledged by W. S. Vorster, 'Literary Reflections on Mark 13:5–37: A Narrated Speech of Jesus', *Neot* 21 (1987), pp.203–224, although, in my opinion, this observation takes us further than Vorster goes.

features also encourage the reading of Mark 13 as part of the whole narrative. For example, the fact that the opponents' plot to kill Jesus (3:6, 12:13) has not been resolved, since it has come to a standstill (12:34) and now waits for the assistance of Judas for its revival (14:1, 10-11);[8] the expectations raised by temporal and geographical patterning of chapters 11-12;[9] and certain other formal features of the chapter.[10] The chapter certainly functions as something of an aside, or a pause, in the narrative; but precisely the fact that it is a pause *in the narrative*, encourages us to read it as some kind of *reflection on* that narrative.

To conclude this point, several factors suggest that chapter 13 is to be read as an integral part of Mark's Gospel in which it stands, and therefore any interpretation of Mark 13 could be expected to offer something which is entirely suitable to its literary context. With this in mind we can return to our first question.

(1) *What support do the two common interpretations find within Mark's story?*

(i) The Parousia

Although some have dared to claim that the parousia is the focus of the whole Gospel,[11] others have recognised that the evidence for such a claim is

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8 S. H. Smith, 'The role of Jesus' opponents in the Markan Drama', *NTS* 35 (1989), pp.161–182. In dramatic terms, it is therefore after a crisis and part of the rising action that will issue in the climax.

9 There is a three day pattern (11:1, 11:12–19, 11:20ff.), the last of which is open-ended, which causes Mark 13 to be read as part of that same day. The normal geographical pattern (Bethany — Jerusalem — Bethany) is interrupted after Jesus leaves Jerusalem (13:1) by this extended aside on the Mount of Olives, before being concluded in Mk 14:3.

10 It is cast as a monologue, which functions similarly to a 'soliloquy', i.e. as a comment on the surrounding story; the story has been decelerating, as more detail has been provided, across the three days which has the effect of focussing attention on Mk 13 as some kind of climax to the three days; the genre of Biblical apocalyptic may also encourage the vision to reflect upon the narrative (as Daniel 7–12 reflects on 1–6 and Zechariah 9–14 reflects on 1–8).

11 For example: V. Taylor, 'Not only is the Parousia the object of [Mark's] earnest expectation, but the events leading up to it and its spectacular character are strongly emphasized,' *The Gospel according to St Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, ²1966, rep. 1981), p.116. This statement is obviously dependent on his view of Mark 13, to

slim indeed.[12] And, in fact, the few texts outside of Mark 13 that are used as evidence can be — and, I would suggest, ought to be — understood differently.

A few texts can be dismissed quickly. Some find an allusion to the parousia in Mk 4:21-23 (the lamp on the lamp stand), since they feel that this will be the time when all will be revealed.[13] However, if this saying does speak of a period of revelation in contrast to the time of secrecy, the post-resurrection period seems to be a better candidate (Mk 9:9), but instead, the saying probably ought to be read as a statement of the ultimate purpose of Jesus' dark sayings (i.e. he hides in order to reveal).[14]

In the passion narrative, the linked verses 14:28 and 16:7 are not overtly about the parousia, and, in fact, should be read in another way, either in association with the launch of the Gentile mission, or renewal of discipleship, or both.[15]

More substantial evidence comes from the parables of the kingdom and the sayings regarding the kingdom.[16] However, these should not be automatically read as if they speak of a still future second coming of Christ. They must be read primarily within the context of Jesus' ministry to Israel.[17] In

which he provides a lone additional reference to Mk 8:38; or W. Marxsen, who 'opted definitely for the parousia as the focus of the whole Gospel', based on his understanding of Mk 14:28, 16:7, cf. Schweizer, p.114; for others, plus a critique, see Geddert, 163ff.

12 Cf. Schweizer, p.115, 'Eschatological or even apocalyptic passages are remarkably scarce in our Gospel.' Apart from ch. 13, he cites only 8:38f.

13 'The parables of Mark 4 (esp. 4.21–23) indicate that there will be a final revelation of that which is now concealed. The final harvest/disclosure time matches Mark's portrayal of the parousia a great deal better than his portrayal of the resurrection,' Geddert, p.53.

14 Both aspects are brought out by C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Collins, 1935, 1967), pp.107–108: 'Mark thought the lamp represented the Kingdom of God, which in the lifetime of Jesus was concealed, but only with the ultimate intention that it should be displayed to the world like a lamp on the lamp stand.' In the evangelist's day, i.e. the post-resurrection period, it therefore meant that 'the time has come when the mystery of the Kingdom of God should be blazoned abroad.'

15 Geddert, ch. 6.

16 J. K. Howard, 'Our Lord's Teaching concerning His Parousia: A Study in the Gospel of Mark', *EvQ* 38 (66), pp.52–58, 68–75, 150–175, uses this distinction to discuss, as his extra-Mark 13 material, Mk 4:(21–23?), 26–32, 8:38 (9:1), 14:62.

17 As C. H. Dodd has so rightly pointed out, *Parables*.

that setting, the future did not have a two-stage structure. The eschatology that Jesus and Israel shared was that of the Old Testament which appears to have looked forward to the one great event at the end of history, namely, the arrival of the kingdom of God (cf. Dan 2:44, 7:13-14). Rather than speaking of a 'second' coming, Jesus is preoccupied with this great end-time event, the final crisis for Israel and the world. His ministry was conducted with the great urgency of knowing that the last days of Israel had arrived, the kingdom of God was just around the corner (Mk 1:15).

When the parables are understood in this context they teach that the end-time harvest was about to begin (The Sower); the ordinary life of Israel was about to be suddenly interrupted by its arrival (4:29) and when it came it would not be nationalistic but would be world-encompassing and universal (4:30-32, drawing on the prophetic 'world-tree' symbol, cf. Daniel 4). With such a crisis facing Israel, Jesus sought to gather together from hard-hearted Israel (4:10-12, cf. Isaiah 6) a righteous remnant (Isaiah's 'holy seed'), who would share in this kingdom whenever it might arrive.[18]

The time of the kingdom's arrival is a crucial question for Mark. Jesus begins his ministry by announcing the kingdom's nearness (1:15), and he eventually reveals that it will arrive in the life-time of some of his hearers (9:1, cf. 13:30). As in Daniel 7, so also in this passage the arrival of the kingdom of God (9:1) is associated with the coming of the Son of man (8:38). Rather than automatically reading the kingdom sayings in terms of a second coming, we should simply notice that they are linked by the text to the coming of the Son of man. Although this saying at 8:38 is often taken to be a clear reference to the parousia, its interpretation is linked closely to that of 13:26. The same is true of Jesus' confession at the trial (14:62), and all three verses can be interpreted in line with the various positions held on 13:26, which is, of course, the subject of this inquiry. Even before final conclusions are reached, however, several observations can be made. What can be clearly said is that all three verses look to the time that Daniel 7:13 will be fulfilled, whenever that may be. It can also be said that all three verses are accompanied by a time reference, which is something of an embarrassment to those who believe these verses refer to the parousia. In France's words, '[these] three allusions to Daniel 7 in Mark all carry with them more or less explicit time-limitations,

18 This is not only the function of the entire 'parables discourse', but the burden of the following section (4:35–8:26) which, in the case of the disciples, is sustained throughout Mark's Gospel.

and focus on *what will be visible within the current generation.*'[19] It can also be said, that in the case of 14:62, the combination with the enthronement Psalm (Ps 110:1), has caused an increasing number of scholars to recognise the fulfilment of Daniel 7:13 in this instance, not in the parousia, but in Jesus' enthronement after the resurrection.[20] This has also lead some to question whether all three should be interpreted in this way.[21]

To summarise, Jesus did not specifically talk of a *second* coming, but, in tune with OT expectation, he spoke of a coming kingdom. The arrival of the kingdom was associated with the coming of the Son of man, and, as for timing, he spoke as if it would certainly come within the lifetime of his hearers.

(ii) The Destruction of the Temple

As support for this position from Mark's wider context, the argument is often advanced that Mark contains an anti-Jerusalem and/or anti-temple polemic, especially in chapters 11-12.[22]

The cursing of the figtree and the so-called cleansing of the temple[23] are both taken as evidence of this anti temple stance. However, a plain reading of the text reveals that these events are not so much directed against a physical structure (i.e. the temple), but against *people*, and that Jesus uses these events to attack the leadership of Israel.[24]

T. J. Geddert, argues against the background of Hosea 9:10–10:2, that the cursed figtree is not a symbol of Israel, nor of the temple, but 'its primary

19 France, *Government*, p.82, my emphasis.

20 G. R. Beasley-Murray, 'Jesus and Apocalyptic: With Special Reference to Mark 14,62', *L'Apocalypse Johanique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. J. Lambrecht; Gembloux: Duculot, 1980), pp.415–429, complains of it being almost a new orthodoxy.

21 France, *Government*, p.77. France is one who interprets all three together of the enthronement, although extending this to encompass the destruction of the temple.

22 Although some find it earlier than these chapters. J. R. Donahue, 'Temple, Trial, and Royal Christology', *The Passion in Mark* (W. H. Kelber, ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), pp.68–69, cites as evidence 3:22, 7:1–13, 8:27–10:52 (i.e. 'the way to Jerusalem as a place of suffering and opposition'). My comments (below) are borne out by all these references, for they show opposition by and to people, not places.

23 For the debate over whether it is a cleansing or a portent of destruction, see C. A. Evans, 'Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?', *CBQ* 51/2 (1989), pp.237–270.

24 This plain reading is commonly recognised by commentators, but is overlooked in their eagerness to draw conclusions regarding the Temple.

referent, [is] the religious leaders'.[25] The same could be argued against the background of Jeremiah 8 or Micah 7.[26]

This observation does not depend only on the background, but also arises out of the structure of Mark's account. The figtree incident must be interpreted in relation to Jesus' action in the temple.[27] When Jesus 'cleanses' the temple, Jesus explains the rationale for his action specifically (11:17) because '*you*' have made it a den of robbers'. Mark immediately clarifies this 2nd person plural, by reporting in v. 18 who took offence at Jesus' indictment, namely, the chief priests and scribes.

The events of the next day, involve further reflection upon these two incidents. After being questioned by the religious leaders (11:27–33), Jesus tells them the parable of the Tenants (12:1–12). Once again the background in Isaiah (ch. 5, cf. Isa 3:13–15) and the foreground in Mark (12:12) shows that 'it is unmistakably Israel's leadership, not Israel itself, that stands under condemnation', in fact, 'the parable itself is not temple-centred at all. The parable is about the condemnation of Israel's leadership. The parable itself features the owner coming, not to destroy the temple, but to judge and replace the tenants,'[28] that is, the shepherds of Israel who have ruined God's vineyard (cf. Isa 3:14–15).

In sum, the material in Mark 11–12 reveals that the polemic is not against the temple, but against the religious leaders of Israel.

This clash with the leaders of Israel touches on a major theme of Mark's story. The arrival of Jesus as true Messiah immediately provokes a leadership crisis within Israel. Mark persistently shows the poverty of the leaders of Israel, whether political (Herod, 3:6, 6:14–29, 8:15) or religious (eg. 3:22–30, 7:1–13, 8:15). At one point, after such a portrayal, Mark uses a common Old Testament metaphor for leadership to comment that the people of Israel

25 Geddert, 126. He argues that, when he is compared with the prophet, Mark actually lessens the guilt of the people and heightens the guilt of the leaders.

26 In Jer 8:13 cf. 10–12; Mic 7:1–2 cf. 3; the blame for the peoples' ruin is laid at the feet of the leadership. This is no doubt true of Joel 1:7, 12 as well, although the reasons for this judgement are not given by Joel and would need to be gleaned from the earlier prophets.

27 These two incidents are interrelated by Mark's oft-used 'sandwich' technique, see J. R. Edwards, 'Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives', *NovT* 21/3 (1989), pp.193–219.

28 Geddert, pp.120–121. I might add, that the background of Malachi 3 that has been on view since Mk 1:2, would lead us to this same conclusion, for when the Lord 'suddenly comes to his temple' he begins to judge *people*.

were 'like sheep without a shepherd' (6:34, cf. Num 27:17, Ezek 34:5). He then goes on to show Jesus as the good shepherd who truly cares for God's flock (6:34–44, cf. Ezekiel 34; see also Mk 14:27).

His clash with the 'false shepherds' began very early and a plot to kill Jesus quickly surfaced (3:6). The opposition gradually built up in intensity,[29] until in chs. 11–12 it comes to a crisis point as Jesus arrives in Jerusalem amidst cries of acclamation suitable for a king (11:1–11), curses the figtree (11:12–14), arrives in the temple to begin the judgement on its leadership (11:15–19, cf. Mal 3:1ff.), then clashes openly with them as they question his authority (11:27–33). He, in turn, questions theirs (12:1–12), and as they unsuccessfully seek to trap him in his words in order to destroy him (12:13ff., cf. 3:6, 11:18), he openly exposes the destructiveness of their leadership to the crowds and his disciples (12:35–44). Beyond this crisis, as we well know, this clash of leadership eventually climaxes in the crucifixion (Mk 14–15).

Associated with the crucifixion account, we find two rather mysterious references to the temple.[30] At the trial some allege that Jesus spoke of destroying the physical temple (14:58), but Mark distances Jesus from their comments by clearly labelling their testimony as 'false' and by saying that they did not even agree amongst themselves. This is hardly strong evidence that Jesus, or Mark, was interested in the destruction of the physical temple.[31] At his crucifixion, we read an allusion to the trial saying (15:29) quickly followed by the even more enigmatic statement regarding the rending of the veil of the temple (15:38).[32] Whatever else it may mean, it is intimately associated with the death of Jesus, and, the combination of the two statements suggests that any temple destruction or reconstruction that Jesus may be involved in is associated with his death. If it also signifies some kind of break with the Jewish temple system, obviously this can be done simply by virtue of Jesus' death and without the necessity of the temple's physical destruction,[33] for the veil is torn at the moment Jesus breathes his last.

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29 1:22, 1:44, 2:6–10, 2:16–17, 2:23–27, 3:1–6, 3:22–30, 7:1–13, 8:11–13, 8:15, 8:31, 9:14, 10:1–12, 10:33–34.

30 Geddert, pp.114–115: 'temple references are invariably wrapped in an aura of mystery'; 'Every reference to the temple outside Mk 13[:2] is puzzling.'

31 Geddert, pp.130–140, correctly shows that it is the reconstruction end of the saying that is of more interest to Mark.

32 Geddert, pp.140–143, lists 35 interpretations.

33 As does Stephen's speech (Acts 7), the epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John. If there is any temple destruction theology in Mark, it is the spiritual destruction which takes place in Jesus' death. An early reading of Mark 13:2 in this direction is hinted at by the textual variant (D W it) interpolating Mk 14:58 and paralleling the thought of John 2:19. Cf. K. E. Bailey, 'The Fall of Jerusalem and Mark's Account of the Cross', *ExpT* 102/4 (1991), pp.102–105. Against W. H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p.83 — 'By dying a death instigated by the temple authorities, he *precipitates* the demise of the authorities' traditional place of power,' (i.e. the temple), my emphasis — Jesus' death *was* their demise.

To summarise: the wider context of Mark 13 does not reveal an anti-temple theme, but an anti-religious authorities theme. The true Shepherd has arrived, the false shepherds occupying his place must make room. But instead, they kill him.

There is one more reference that needs to be discussed, lying in the immediate context of the apocalyptic discourse. The only clear reference to the physical temple's ruin[34] is Jesus' answer to the supposedly awe-struck disciple (13:1–2). This is usually called a 'prophecy' or 'prediction' of the destruction of the temple, implying that Jesus had AD 70 specifically in mind at this point.[35] However, does this saying need to have such an exalted label?

The saying needs to be understood in relation to the disciple's statement in v. 1,[36] which draws upon OT Zion theology. According to this OT stream of belief, Jerusalem's splendour guaranteed the security of God's people. For example, Psalm 48 tells us: 'As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure for ever.

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34 Geddert, p.117, admits this: 'That the temple's ruin is predicted by Jesus is made unambiguously clear in 13.2, even if all the other texts about the temple leave that point uncertain.'

35 Eg. Beasley-Murray's commentary opens with the statement: 'The prophecy of the destruction of the temple ...' *Jesus and the Last Days* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), p.377. Such labelling clearly begs the question.

36 It is not usual to do so, due to the legacy of form criticism, which was only interested in the saying of such pronouncement stories, not the setting, which was considered artificial. However, recent work on pronouncement stories suggests that their meaning comes from the interaction between setting and saying, cf. R. C. Tannehill, 'Attitudinal Shift in Synoptic Pronouncement Stories', *Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism in Honor of William A. Beardslee* (R. A. Spencer, ed.; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980), pp.183–197; 'Synoptic Pronouncement Stories: Form and Function', *SBL 1980 Seminar Papers* (P. J. Achtemeier, ed.; Chico: Scholars, 1980), pp.51–55; 'Introduction: The Pronouncement Story and its Types', 'Varieties of Synoptic Pronouncement Stories', *Semeia* 20 (1981), pp.1–13, 101–119.

Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love' (vv. 8–9). Pilgrims were encouraged to tour the city, and view its magnificent buildings to strengthen their faith in God. Again in the words of Psalm 48:

> 'Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end' (vv. 12–14).

When this disciple says 'Look, Teacher! What marvellous stones! What magnificent buildings!', rather than the words of an awe-struck country bumpkin from Galilee, totally inappropriate to the situation of great conflict and turmoil that they have just left behind, Mark 13:1 appears to be a word of encouragement to Jesus. This faithful disciple, fully aware of the trauma of the preceding scenes, draws upon his OT piety and points to the magnificent buildings of Zion in an attempt to remind Jesus that God is on the side of his people.

Jesus' reply (13:2), therefore, would have come as a tremendous shock when he says that such security is not found in Israel's Zion theology. Jerusalem and her temple are not where security lies. It is all part of the impermanent creation that will one day pass away into oblivion. There is no need for this to be deemed a prediction/prophecy, as if Jesus had AD 70 specifically in view — even if subsequent history revealed that to be the date of the temple's ruin. Rather, it is a passing remark by Jesus that says the disciple has his eyes on the wrong place. Security is to be found no longer in the structures of Israel, he should shift his gaze and begin to look for something else. Jesus' hasty dismissal of this disciple's OT piety reveals that he is more interested in the constructive end of this shift, than he is with the physical structure that occupies the disciple's attention. What should occupy the disciple's attention will be revealed in Jesus' apocalyptic discourse.

I am now able to answer my first question. The story which surrounds Jesus' apocalyptic discourse, shows no explicit interest in either the parousia or the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. So far, it seems that neither commonly adopted position on Mark 13:24–27 has explicit support from the context of Mark's story.

I can now deal with my second question.

(2) ***The shared assumption***

Both positions share the assumption that the expectation of the coming of the Son of man raised by Mark 13:24–27 finds its fulfilment beyond the pages of Mark's Gospel. By proposing an extratextual referent for the coming of the Son of man, they assume that no intratextual referent can be found. My

second question asks whether this assumption is justified. To answer the question, I will suggest that there *is* an intratextual referent to the coming of the Son of man and that Mark's passion narrative explicitly encourages us to see this. This then suggests a third option for interpreting Mark 13:24-27.

Firstly, we should deal with the broad sweep of Mark 13.

On a broad canvas, the discourse raises a three-part expectation:

1. vv. 5–23 speak of a situation of cosmic turmoil and the last days of Israel in which the disciples will find themselves suffering on Jesus' account. In this context, the disciples will see the 'awful horror' or 'horrible sacrilege' (v. 14), which will issue in the severest time of distress of all time (v. 19). In this time of greatest distress, the disciples may well be tempted to move away from their previous confession of Jesus as the Christ (vv. 21–23). This is the first expectation: the time of great distress.
2. vv. 24–26 reveal the second expectation: 'in those days, after the distress, ... *then*'. Following the distress, Daniel 7:13 will be fulfilled, the coming of the Son of man will occur.
3. v. 27 *then*. The third expectation is that he will send out his messengers, and the harvest of the elect from all the world will begin.

The sayings and similes that follow say that all these things will take place within the current generation (v. 30), although, because the precise timing is unknown, the disciples are encouraged to watch for 'the hour' (v. 32) of fulfilment, i.e., the hour that encompasses all three expectations, but centres upon the coming of the Son of man.[37]

The two common interpretations of Mark 13 assume that there is no intratextual fulfilment to these three expectations. But is this the case?

At this point a third view can be developed, following the suggestive comments of R. H. Lightfoot and others.

Despite the prevailing note that the exact time of the Hour (v. 32) is unknown, the final parable (vv. 34-37) contains some specific time references which are overlaid upon the chapter's expectations. Verse 35 raises the question: Will the coming be at evening or midnight or cock crow or dawn? These demarcations of the four watches of the Roman night now act as 'focalising moments' that guide the expectations of the chapter. When one of these times arrives, it will be greeted with the expectancy of potentially being the hour of fulfilment. When it passes by without any fulfilment of the chapter's expec-

[37] France, *Government*, pp.78–80, makes something of the hour being singular. However, the fact that the chronology of the three expectations centre upon the coming of the Son of Man makes it easily read as a composite hour.

tations, then the next time note takes on an even more intensified expectancy.

It was noticed some years ago by R. H. Lightfoot that these same time references can be found in Mark's passion narrative.[38] Although his observation has not been widely taken up,[39] it is suggestive of a third possibility for interpreting Mark 13:24-27. Once it is realized that these time references structure and guide the expectations of ch. 13, then it becomes clear that *Mark's passion narrative* may actually provide the explicit fulfilment of the expectations raised by that chapter.

Let us briefly survey the passion narrative with the three broad expectations raised by Mark 13 in view. The first was the time of great distress.

The last supper was held in the *evening*, the first of our time references (14:17), but the departure of the Son of man (v. 21) and the coming of the kingdom (v. 25) are still future to this occasion, so this hour passes with no fulfilment, rather the expectations are sustained. Then, in a mini-apocalyptic discourse (14:26–31),[40] Jesus uses Zechariah 13 to warn the disciples that the future will have severe consequences for them too, so severe that even the great Peter will fall.[41] His fall will take place that same day, before cock-crow (v. 30) — flagging another of our time-references.

Although the time note is not explicitly given, the Gethsemane scene

38 R. H. Lightfoot, 'The Connexion of Chapter Thirteen with the Passion Narrative', *The Gospel Message of St Mark* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1950), pp.48–59.

39 Geddert, ch. 4, takes it seriously and provides a listing of others who have done so (p.91 nn. 7, 8) to which can be added M. Smith, 'The Composition of Mark 11–16', *HeyJ* 22/4 (1981), pp.364–65; T. Radcliffe, '"The Coming of the Son of Man" Mark's Gospel and the subversion of "the apocalyptic imagination"', *Language, Meaning and God: Essays in Honour of Herbert McCabe O.P.* (B. Davies, ed.; London: Chapman, 1987), pp.176–189. A. Farrer, *A Study in St Mark* (London: Dacre, 1951), pp.133–141, also connects Mark 13 with the passion narrative.

40 For links between the denial-sequence and Mark 13, cf. M. Wilcox, 'The Denial - Sequence in Mark XIV. 26–31, 66–72', *NTS* 17/4 (1971), pp.426–436. He says, of Mk 14:26, 'now the Lord is in fact making his way "to the Mount of Olives": the hour has dawned for the time of desolation and testing described in Zech. xiii. 7 – xiv. 4'.

41 Despite the more usual negative assessment, the text encourages this positive assessment of Peter. Cf. T. E. Boomershine & G. L. Bartholomew, 'The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8', *JBL* 100/2 (1981), pp.213–223; T. E. Boomershine, 'Mark 16:8 and the Apostolic Commission', *JBL* 100/2 (1981), pp.225–239; 'Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 39 (1987), pp.47–68; W. S. Vorster, 'Characterization of Peter in the Gospel of Mark', *Neot* 21 (1987), pp.57–76.

(14:32–42) takes place in the midst of the night, *midnight*.[42] In this scene, which has many links with Mark 13,[43] the projected time of distress begins. Here, in the midst of great distress (v. 33-34), Jesus prays that 'the hour' might pass from him (v. 36), clearly referring to his coming death. The disciples are to watch and pray lest they fall in this time of testing, yet three times they are found sleeping (cf. 13:33–37). And then, the hour that was previously unknown and for which they were to watch (13:32) suddenly arrives (14:41 — 'the *hour* has come. The *Son of man* is betrayed into the hands of sinners'). With the arrival of Judas and the arresting party sent from the leaders of Israel, Jesus knows that his death is inevitable, the shepherd is about to be struck down, the hour of great distress has begun. The disciples seem to realize this and they flee (vv. 43–52, cf. 13:14ff.) and the severity of this hour of distress is underlined by an allusion to Amos 2:16 in v. 52, where the distress of the Day of the Lord would be so severe that even the bravest warrior would flee away naked.[44]

As the distress begins to arrive, the second expectation raised by the apocalyptic discourse re-emerges. At the end of his trial Jesus once again promises the coming of the Son of man (14:62), and underlines the imminence of this event by telling his enemies that they themselves will see the fulfilment of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. On the other side of the trial, we realise that the hour of distress which is now unfolding is so severe that even Peter the chief disciple falls, as Jesus warned (14:66–72). And, we are told, it is *cock crow*. This is our third time reference: although the time of distress has begun, there is still no coming of the Son of man. There is only one time reference to go (dawn), and it now carries the full weight of expectation.

It appears, for the first time,[45] in 15:1, as the Sanhedrin reaches their deci-

42 Geddert, p.104 n. 51, guesses the reason for not mentioning midnight: 'Mark does not want to over-stress the eschatological significance of the Gethsemane scene itself. After all, *it is the whole passion*, not only the midnight arrest in the garden, *which constitutes 'the hour' that has arrived and that fulfils*, on one level at least, *eschatological expectations*,' [my emphasis].

43 'The links between the Doorkeeper parable (13.33–37) and the Gethsemane account (14.32–42) are so remarkable that the burden of proof is surely on anyone who wants to consider them coincidental,' Geddert, p.91. See also W. H. Kelber, 'The Hour of the Son of Man and the Temptation of the Disciples (Mark 14.32–42)', *The Passion in Mark*, pp.41–60.

44 Austin Farrer, *Mark*, p.141, also sees in this verse a fulfilment of Mk 13:16

45 The fact that it appears twice (15:1, 16:1) splits the fulfilment of expectations, to enable first the portrayal of the greatest distress (the cross), and, in due time, the

sion. In the crucifixion scene time is slowed down, 'the hour' that Jesus prayed to avoid, now ticks by — 'the third hour' (v. 25), 'the sixth hour' (v. 33), then 'the ninth' (v.34).[46] This slow motion account enables us to feel the full weight of this horrific scene. We watch at a distance as the Gentiles declare our hero innocent, then exchange him for a murderer, scourge him, mock him, strip him and crucify him. But the real horror of the scene comes home in the role played by the leaders of Israel. It is they who hand him over to the Gentiles, they ask for his death, they barter for the murderer, and when Jesus is on the cross they relish the moment: apparently fully cognisant of his mission, they mock that mission; and showing the depths of their unbelief to the last, just before he dies they demand one more sign from him (15:31-32): if he can defeat the cross, *then* they will believe.

Here is the 'awful horror', the great horrifying sacrilege at the heart of Israel, where it ought not be (13:14): Israel's long-awaited Messiah arrives, and Israel's leaders crucify him, and relish the moment.[47]

Where is the greatest distress of all time that follows hard on its heels? Is it not in the arrival of the hour that had filled Jesus with so much anxiety, as we hear the cry of dereliction that screams out of the apocalyptic darkness: 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' (15:34)?

But if this is the great distress, where are the other two expectations? Where is the coming of the Son of man and the gathering of the elect?

In Mark 16:2 our last time note appears yet again. In fact, just to make sure we get the point, two time references ('very early, just after sunrise') tell us that it is dawn. Then the young man at the tomb reports that Jesus, the crucified one, has risen (v. 6). Jesus had promised that the Son of man would suffer and then rise (8:31, 9:9-13, 9:31, 10:33-34). He had also promised a time of great distress followed by the coming of the Son of man (ch. 13). It seems that the passion narrative brings these two sets of expectations into line

coming of the Son of Man (the resurrection).

46 Kelber, 'The Hour', p.44, 'Mk resumes the hour motif and extends it, in typical redactional fashion, into a threefold pattern to indicate the heightening of Jesus' being "delivered up" on the cross. "The hour" is therefore a symbol for Jesus' passion ... which commences with the arrest immediately following the Gethsemane story and culminates in the cross.' With Mark 13 in the background 'it qualifies this suffering in an eschatological sense.'

47 J. Schreiber, *Theologie des Vertrauens* (Hamburg, 1967), pp.142–44, also made this identification between the abomination of desolation and the piety of the high priests and scribes, seeking the life of Jesus in the temple.

with each other, and that we are meant to see that in the resurrection/exaltation of Jesus the Son of man has come. And with his coming, the kingdom of God has come in power (9:1, 13:29–30, cf. Acts 2:33–36, Rom 1:4).

If so, we should see the fulfilment of Mark 13's final expectation: the sending of his messengers to gather the elect from the four corners of the earth. And it is therefore no surprise that Mark ends his Gospel by recording the young man's command for the women to tell the disciples to meet the glorified Son of man in Galilee (16:7–8). This command holds the promise of the launch of the Gentile mission.[48] The harvest of the vindicated Son of man is about to begin!

Conclusion to Part A

Jesus' apocalyptic discourse in Mark should be read as an integral part of Mark's story. When the wider concerns of this story are examined there appears to be no explicit interest in a second coming, but plenty of interest in the Kingdom of God as expected by the OT, which is linked with the coming of the Son of man. There also appears to be no explicit interest in attacking the Jerusalem temple, although the issue of the leadership clash between Jesus and Israel's corrupt shepherds is a big concern. The one text (13:2) that mentions the ruin of the physical temple, is a passing remark that dismisses that structure from having any theological significance. If it appears anywhere, the break with Judaism is sufficiently achieved at the cross in its own right. In short, the two common interpretations find no support in the wider context of Mark's story.

Following the suggestive comments of Lightfoot and others, I have also attempted to show that the three broad expectations erected by Mark 13 all find their counterpart within Mark's passion narrative. It appears that these expectations (the distress, the coming of the Son of man, and the sending of the angels to gather the elect) are fulfilled in the events of Jesus death, his

48 Geddert, p.166, argues for discipleship renewal as the intermediate step. That the time of mission begins after Christ's exaltation is borne out by Acts and the rest of the NT. That there was a great time of mission following the destruction of Jerusalem is an entirely theoretical proposal and cannot be borne out by historical evidence. Cf. R. Maddox, 'The Sense of New Testament Eschatology', *RefThR* 36/2 (1977), p.47: 'The artificiality of this exegesis is at once apparent. Nowhere in the New Testament is the fall of Jerusalem made a condition for a fully effective Christian mission: on the contrary, passages like Colossians 1:6, Romans 15:17–24 and the whole book of Acts imply a mission "in its full strength" long before the fall of Jerusalem.'

resurrection and the launch of his mission. In other words, Jesus' discourse in Mark 13 is an apocalyptic precursor to his coming passion and resurrection/exaltation.

Some who read Mark 13:24-27 of the parousia, having noticed these connections, state that the passion narrative seems to be a *first fulfilment* of the expectations of Mark 13.[49] My question is that, if the passion narrative is so explicitly set against the earlier expectations of the apocalyptic discourse, why shouldn't it be read as *the* fulfilment?

As a necessary part of the Fall of Jerusalem interpretation, Mark 13:24-27, others read *in the first instance* of Jesus' vindication in his resurrection/exaltation. My question can be repeated: If Mark's passion narrative appears to present the resurrection/vindication of Jesus as the coming of the Son of man, why shouldn't it be read as *the* fulfilment?

To conclude, when read against the explicit story of Mark's Gospel, it appears that the coming of the Son of man promised in Daniel 7:13, and quoted in Mark 13:26, refers not to a still distant parousia, nor to the destruction of the temple. Mark's Gospel tells us that the Son of man comes when Jesus rose again from the dead. That is when he received the Kingdom from the Ancient of Days, and began to share it with his people.

Of course, I have been discussing the framework within which Mark 13 should be interpreted. Since I have dealt with the apocalyptic discourse itself only on the broad canvas, a further question could now be asked: If the apocalyptic discourse is an apocalyptic precursor to the passion of Jesus, can all of its details be read in this light?

Part B: Mark 13 as an Apocalyptic Precursor to the Passion

B1. The Questions

After Jesus' unexpected dismissal of Zion theology (vv. 1–2), four of his inner circle of disciples ask him two more questions (vv. 3-4). If their eternal city was simply another part of a creation bound for destruction, then Jesus must be talking about the end of everything. They want to know 'When?', when was this end that Jesus spoke about? There is nothing wrong with this question. However, they immediately translate it into another one. Presumably so that the end could be spotted clearly, they proceed to ask for a sign.

In the flow of Mark's story, this second question is yet another exam-

49 For example: Geddert, pp.106–108; Lightfoot, p.54; W. H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark. A New Place and A New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p.143.

ple of the disciples' slowness to comprehend. Jesus had already refused to give a sign (8:11-12), saying that this generation would not receive one. Asking for a sign places the disciples on the side of his opponents, against whom he had already warned them (8:14–15).

B2. The Answer

i. Watch yourselves (vv. 5-23)

The first half of Jesus' reply to them is a warning against such a sign-seeking attitude (vv. 5-23). He considers this attitude dangerous because it will place the disciples at risk of being led astray from following Jesus. Note that his warning focuses upon *them*: 'watch out no-one deceives you' (v. 5), 'you watch yourselves' (v. 9),[50] 'look out' (v. 23).

Verses 5-6 urge the disciples to take heed lest they be led astray by certain people who come in his name, saying ἐγώ εἰμι ('It is I'). Another reference to these people concludes the first half of the discourse by way of *inclusio* (vv. 21–23), showing that this is the real danger facing the disciples against which Jesus is warning them. In an attempt to identify these people, there has been much sifting of extrabiblical historical material, but there is no need to look so widely. Just as the true Shepherd comes to his sheep to find many false shepherds plundering the flock (Ezekiel 34), so too Jesus has come as Israel's Messiah, but finds many false shepherds in his place. The leadership of Israel, both political and religious, is thoroughly corrupt. They form a significance threat for the disciples, because they will point away from Jesus as the Christ. The disciples have already confessed Jesus to be the Christ (Mk 8:29), and so it matters very little who the proposed alternatives (13:21) may be. The point is that this will constitute a threat to the confession of Jesus as the Christ which the disciples have already made. Deuteronomy 13 even warns that these false Christs, (i.e. those falsely occupying the leadership of Israel) and false prophets may even go so far as to perform miracles in their endeavours to lead the disciples astray. This makes it especially dangerous to disciples who are seeking signs, as we shall see below. Jesus warns the disciples about a false leadership in Israel which will attempt to compromise their identification of Jesus as Christ.

Jesus is eager to warn the disciples, because they are living in dangerous times. He begins by telling them what they should not worry about (vv. 7-8).

50 The significance of the reflexive pronoun is almost universally overlooked by commentators and translators.

Some may point to these as signs, but this too is misguided. Such things are no signal of the end. They are always here and always have been here. They are merely part of a fallen world. They are not the birth, they are merely the birth pangs. Do not be lead astray by these things, 'the end is not yet' (v. 7).

Rather than looking out for signs, rather than worrying about world events, the disciples should be looking out for *themselves* (v. 9). For they are the ones in danger. They do not have the privilege of being detached observers. As disciples of Jesus they will be actively engaged in his mission and that will bring them into trouble (vv. 9-11).[51] Here it is important to notice that verse 10 is a statement of *priority* not chronology. The world must *first of all importance* hear about Jesus Christ. Because the gospel mission is of first priority the disciples will keep going through the difficult times. Their involvement in Christ's mission will bring them into great trouble — even striking at their very families (vv. 12-13a). Micah 7 had predicted a division in Israel in the last days and Jesus now reveals that the division will be over him. As the core group of people drafted into his service, the disciples will suffer for him, which is why they must not watch out for signs, they must watch out for themselves. For under such pressure they will be tempted to save their own lives and jettison the work of the gospel (cf. 8:34–37). They must watch out for themselves, for their task must continue right through until the end (v. 13b).

Jesus then moves on to warn his disciples about a terrible time that they will have to go through in their immediate future (vv. 14–20). The phrase 'abomination of desolation', drawn from Daniel, signifies a destructive sacrilege — something that flies in the face of God and all that is holy and true and right. When Jesus calls upon his disciples as readers of Daniel to understand, it is a most intriguing statement for there is not enough information here to enable understanding. But there is one hint of a clue, for when Daniel wrote he was told that he could not understand his vision since it concerned the time of the end. When Jesus calls upon his disciples to understand, it signifies that the time of the end was at hand, since understanding was at least a possibility. But the four disciples would have to wait for the unfolding of events yet to come before the nature of this desolating sacrilege would become clear.

The arrival of this destructive sacrilege is associated with a terrible time of suffering. As well as the generalised suffering that is part and parcel of the

51 I have dealt with these verses more fully in 'The Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels: the Equipment of the Servant', *Spirit of the Living God, Part 1*. (ed. B. G. Webb; Explorations 5; Sydney: Anzea, 1991), pp.45–75.

fallen world (vv. 7–8) and the generalised suffering that goes along with the preaching of the gospel (vv. 9–11), Jesus tells his four disciples that they will have to endure a time of great suffering (vv. 19–20). This appears to be more than just prophetic hyperbole. Daniel 12:1 spoke of an unprecedented time of distress that would usher in the end-time resurrection. Jesus quotes this verse and adds to it: not only is the suffering unprecedented, but it is 'never to be equalled again' (v. 19). This suffering will be the greatest time of distress that this world would ever endure. Because of the unique terror of this time (v. 17), they ought to pray that it will come at a favourable time (v. 18). They should flee when they can, unencumbered by household goods (vv. 15-16).

During this time, the pressure will really be on. Under such a time of intense suffering, the only thing that will prevent the disciples failing completely will be the divine decision to shorten the time (v. 20). Under such pressure it would be easy to be led astray into something more comfortable, so Jesus ends with the warning with which he began (vv. 21-23).

It now becomes clear why the disciples' sign-seeking attitude will be a danger to them. On the road to Caesarea Philippi they have already cast their vote: the Christ is Jesus (Mk 8:27). There will be people who do not accept this confession. As they point *away* from Jesus as the Christ, the temptation will come to the disciples to deny their previous confession, to forget that Jesus is the Christ. They may even do miracles (as Deuteronomy 13 had warned) to endorse their claims.[52] If the disciples are fascinated by signs, then they would be in severe danger, danger to forsake their loyalty to Jesus as the Christ. Do not look for signs, says Jesus, look out for yourselves, for a great pressure is coming. You will see this awful horror and hard on its heels will come the greatest distress this world has ever known (v. 19), and in that pressure you will be tempted to desert me. Watch out!

The disciples had asked a two-part question: When? What sign? Jesus has dealt with their signs question — by warning them against such an attitude: it is dangerous. Now he turns to the question of 'when?' (vv. 24-37).

52 It is important to read this in the context of Jesus' discussion to his disciples prior to his death and resurrection. He is evidently drawing upon the warning of Deuteronomy 13 which spoke of the *possibility* of signs and wonders performed by false prophets. It is right for Jesus to raise this as a possibility here as well. Whether or not the possibility actually becomes a reality, remains to be seen in the course of events to follow. On my reading of Mark, in which the religious leadership of Israel represent the false Messiahs, the miracles were *not* part of their repertoire, as far as we know.

ii. What you will see

Notice that from now on he tells them of a definite sequence of events: 'in those days, after that distress ...' (v. 24); 'and then they will see the son of Man coming ...' (v. 26); 'and then he will send out his angels to gather in the elect' (v. 27). Rather than looking for signs, this is what they will see: the glorious, victorious coming of the Son of man. Now of course, Jesus is referring to himself here, as Mark's Gospel has made plain by this point.

Jesus quotes Daniel 7:13 in which one like a Son of man comes to the throne of God in the midst of a heavenly judgement scene and is awarded all power and authority and dominion and an everlasting Kingdom. Having received the Kingdom from God, the second half of the chapter reveals that he then shares it with the people of God. This is what they will see fulfilled.

The disciples are not to watch for signs: it is dangerous, for it will open them up to being lead astray during the time of great distress. Instead, Jesus tells them of a sequence of events which they will see. A destructive sacrilege will issue in the time of greatest distress; after that the coming of the Son of man, who will then send out his messengers to gather the elect from all over the earth. That is what they must now look for.

But can the timing be made more specific? When is this coming going to be? The generation of the first hearers will not pass away before the Son of man comes in power to receive his kingdom (v. 30). This is similar to the statement in Mark 9:1 that the Kingdom will arrive in power before the death of some of his hearers. That narrows it down to the lifetime of these disciples. However, it cannot be narrowed down any further. As Jesus talks to his four disciples, not even the Son knows when his coming will be (v. 32). It may become clearer later, as the course of events unfold (cf. Mk 14:25, 41), but at this moment, he is as ignorant as everyone else.

However, since the precise timing is unknown, but yet it is within a generation, the disciples are told to be ready for it any minute (vv. 33–37). It could be at any time of the day, so all the disciples, not just the four who asked the question, need to keep constant watch. For one day soon, (v. 35) either at evening, or midnight, or cockcrow, or at dawn, some day, sometime, they will see the Son of man coming and then issuing the command to gather the elect from the four corners of the earth.

That is their 'when?' question answered: Jesus changes their focus from earthly things such as a temple made with human hands that will some day be destroyed; and from signs which are a dangerous distraction. He then focuses them on the thing that really matters: the coming of the Son of man and

his eternal Kingdom, followed by the gathering of the elect into that kingdom of God, as the glorified Son of man shares his kingdom with his people. That is what is important. That is what they should be looking for and waiting for and watching for.

And as we have already seen, the remaining passion narrative reveals that the expectations generated by the eschatological discourse find their fulfilment in the passion and exaltation of Jesus.

Part C: Two 'Problems'

To conclude this discussion, two problems need to be raised and briefly answered. After what I have said above, some readers will be asking whether it is right to expect a second coming. The answer to that problem is 'yes'. Even though Jesus did not talk of his second coming explicitly in the Gospel of Mark, but spoke within the framework of OT expectation of the Kingdom of God, a second coming is implicit in the Gospel material. Daniel 7 promised two things: 1. The heavenly reception of the kingdom by the Son of man (vv. 1-14); 2. The sharing of that Kingdom with the saints. In terms of the Gospel of Mark, the first expectation has been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has arrived with power when Jesus rose from the dead and was exalted to heaven. However, the second expectation is yet to be fulfilled in the experience of God's people. Although the people of God have entered the Kingdom, through becoming as a little child and following Jesus wherever that may lead (Mk 10:15, 29–31), the Kingdom is still a *promise* to us. In other words, the people of God live 'by faith'. The implication is that there must be a second coming when all ungodly power is destroyed, God's everlasting kingdom arrives, and Jesus shares it with his people.[53]

The second problem concerns the other Synoptic parallels to Mark 13. How do they fit in with the interpretation of Mark 13 proposed here? The first thing to say is that even on the other two views this question is not without its problems. On the one hand, Matthew 24 appears to be more explicitly about the parousia, but on the other, Luke 17 and 21 appear to be very clearly

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[53] Anything short of this is not really the Kingdom of God as promised by the Bible. See further, R. Hiers, *The Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Tradition* (Gainesville: University of South Florida, 1970); *Jesus and the Future. Unresolved Questions for Eschatology* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1986); and the classic by J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892, [3]1900, in English as *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (Lives of Jesus; R. Hiers & D. L. Holland, eds./transls.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

about the destruction of Jerusalem. Given this data, interpreters can interpret Mark 13 either way, depending upon which parallel they feel is most significant. However, instead of interpreting one by the other, it is important to allow each Gospel to speak for itself. This means that the first question to be answered is whether the explanation offered here is the best explanation of Mark. If it is, its relationship with the other two can be explained variously. If Matthew speaks of the parousia, and Luke speaks of the destruction of the temple, then one alternative may be that one of the evangelists developed Jesus' teaching in one direction and one in another, both drawing out what they felt to be implicit. However, another alternative is that the interpretation proposed here should lead us to re-examine the parallel passages afresh, for it is just possible that they too speak more of Jesus' death and resurrection than they do of his parousia or the events of AD 70 so important to Jewish history, but of questionable significance to the New Testament.[54]

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54 I hope to develop these ideas further in future studies.

MARK 16:1–8:
THE EMPTY TOMB OF A HERO?

Peter G. Bolt

Hamilton (using Bickermann) has suggested that in antiquity a Hero was proven to be such by means of an empty grave. This view, however, needs to be re-evaluated in the light of the 'empty tombs' associated with Heroes and the 'tombs' associated with some of those reputed to have been translated. This evidence is compared to Mark's portrayal of Jesus' empty tomb to show that it is neither the empty tomb of a Hero, nor of one who has been translated (as has been contended), but of one who has been raised from the dead.

I. Introduction

The Greek Hero cults consisted of sacrifices offered at the grave of deceased human beings, in the belief that they were still active and able to exercise a powerful influence amongst those who still dwell under the sun.[1] Heroes appear as beings worthy of worship alongside the gods, for the first time in about the year 620 BC, when Drakon committed the laws of his country to writing at Athens,[2] although, presumably, he was enshrining a practice which was much older. The fact that Pausanias, in his description of his travels in the early second century, is still able to list a considerable number of such cults indicates that the Hero-cult was a persistent feature of Greek life for centuries.

As part of his argument that Mark constructed 16:1–8 upon the model of Hellenistic translation stories, N.Q. Hamilton claimed that 'a hero is recognised by the evidence of an empty grave'.[3] Since his statement has been repeated by others as if true, it is worth closer attention.

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[1]See E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925) ch. 4; and L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921).
[2]Rohde, *Psyche*, 115, citing Porph. *Abstr.* 4.22.
[3]N.Q. Hamilton, 'Resurrection Tradition and the Composition of Mark', *JBL* 84 (1965) 418; repeated by W.L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 586, n. 11; R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A*

1. Bickermann's Contribution

The classification of Mark 16:1–8 as a translation or 'removal' story[4] goes back to the 1924 article by E. Bickermann,[5] which was initially put to rest fairly quickly[6] but has recently gained a more positive evaluation. However, Bickermann's form-critical work is not without its problems, and those who have cited him have accepted his assessment uncritically.[7]

Bickermann[8] insisted that an empty grave was the sign of a translation, whereas the sign of a resurrection was not an empty tomb but the appearance of the one raised from the dead. On such reasoning, Mark 16:1–8 was constructed as a story of translation, not resurrection.

There are several problems with Bickermann's thesis. (1) The insistence that the two 'signs' are strictly indicative of either a translation or a resurrection no doubt carried more

Commentary on His Apology for the Cross (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 994.

[4]That is, where a person is removed 'from amongst men' and translated to another place, be it the Elysian fields, the Isles of the Blessed, amongst the gods, a subterranean abode, *etc.*

[5]E. Bickermann, 'Das leere Grab', *ZNW* 23 (1924) 281–291.

[6]*Cf.* W. Nauck: 'The conjecture of E. Bickermann...has found no approval' ('Die Bedeutung des leeren Grabes für den Glauben an den Auferstandenen', *ZNW* 47 (1956) 250 n. 40 (my translation). It received brief mention in a couple of German commentaries, but was ignored in English literature until Hamilton, who directly influenced Lane and Gundry.

[7]*E.g.* Hamilton, 'Resurrection Tradition'; Lane, *Mark*, 586 n. 11; Gundry, *Mark*, 994; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium. kap. 8,27-16,20* (Freiburg; Herder, 1977) 2.252, adding evidence from G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu. Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1971); A. Yarbro Collins, 'The Empty Tomb and Resurrection according to Mark', *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 119–48; *idem*, 'Apotheosis and Resurrection', in P.B.S. Giversen (ed.), *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus UP, 1995) 88–100; M.A. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 288 n. 30. Only H. Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions.* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1991) 234–38 rejects the notion that Mark was composed in the light of this Hellenistic literary motif (citing Bickermann and Hamilton) in favour of the historicity of the empty tomb traditions, but even he fails to question the validity of the arguments for that motif.

[8]Bickermann, 'Das leere Grab', 286ff.

weight during the era of the form criticism, in which he operated, than it should today—although it should be noted that his assignment of Mark 16 to a 'translation' story did not even commend itself to Bultmann.[9] (2) Bickermann's form-critical assessment of the various story-groupings, by which he hopes to isolate the characteristic features upon which he insists, tends unfortunately towards a fairly a-historical assessment of the material. Many of his examples are later than the NT, are clearly dependent upon its tradition, and therefore cannot help the reconstruction of the framework within which Mark's early readers would have understood his final chapter.[10] (3) In order to maintain his dichotomy strictly, Bickermann does not fairly assess some of the evidence.[11] The concept of resurrection is only possible within a Jewish framework, and since it involves the coming out of the grave alive again, it implies both an empty grave and the potential for appearances. As such, both elemehts can be 'signs' of a

[9]R. Bultmann finds the essay 'highly instructive' but then fundamentally disagrees with it: '[Bickermann] rightly emphasises the contrast of the appearances of the risen Christ with the empty tomb, though he wrongly classes the latter among the "Removal" stories. But the story of the empty tomb is without any doubt not a "Removal Legend", but an apologetic Legend, as ἠγέρθη is meant to show, as is plain from Mk 16:6. It is erroneous to think that the empty tomb presupposes an immediate Ascension; the very opposite is the case, as the motif of the stone rolled away indicates' (*History of the Synoptic Tradition* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1968] 290 n. 3).

[10]As he turns to Mk. 16 in part 3, Bickermann talks of 'this usual proof' of a translation. But, up to this point, the article has only demonstrated the 'proof' by later material, mostly dependent upon the NT!

[11]Can the Lazarus story be regarded simply as an appearance story (Jn. 11:44), since it clearly contains the additional feature of an empty tomb, rather dramatically portrayed? Both elements happily co-exist in *Gos. Nic.* 17:1—in the same verse! It seems entirely arbitrary, where both elements appear in the same text, to insist that this constitutes evidence of two distinct sources contaminating one another. Once again, such arguments were far more convincing previously, given the methodological stance of a bygone age, than they are today. *Acts of Peter* 28 hardly constitutes evidence of an appearance, since here it is a corpse which has not been buried that is in view, which is more analogous to the raising of Jairus' daughter from her bed, than it is to the raising of Jesus from the tomb. The Bride from Corinth has both elements; when the two witnesses (Rev. 11) stand on their feet, on Bickermann's criteria it seems to be more consistent with an appearance than a translation.

resurrection having occurred—although there is nothing, of course, which compels the mention of both on every occasion.

2. Hamilton's Heroes

Bickermann's focus was upon the translation motif, and his few passing references to the Heroes were to those whose bodies could not be found and so were assumed to have been translated. It is not Bickermann who stated that 'a hero is declared such by evidence of an empty grave', but Hamilton, who then attempted to enlist E. Rohde's discussion of 'empty graves' as additional support.

In actual fact, Hamilton's statement has confused two motifs which should be kept quite distinct, namely, that of the translation-to-heaven (or wherever) motif, and that of the Hero. Although Mark 16:1–8 may have struck some chords for those readers familiar with such themes, the dissimilarity to both themes indicates that Mark utilises the empty tomb to present Jesus as neither a Hero, nor one who has been translated, but as one who has been raised from the dead.

II. Jesus the Hero?

1. 'Empty Graves' and Heroes

It was almost axiomatic in the ancient world that a dead person should be properly buried. Although the last act of contempt towards an enemy could be to leave them unburied, generally speaking such an act was a mark of disrespect; it was also dangerous, given the potential for the unburied to become vindictive ghosts.

The importance of providing a proper burial no doubt lies behind the practice of providing a cenotaph if the body was not accessible, *i.e.* κενὸς τάφος, 'empty grave'—or κενὸν μνῆμα, 'empty monument'; or κενὸν ἠρίον, 'empty mound'. Not only can this practice be discerned in the literature,[12] but Pausanias

[12]Eurip. *Helen* 1057ff, 1546; Lycophron, *Alex.* 366; Xen. *Anab.* 6.4; Plut. 1130B (metaphorically). Rohde (*Psyche*, 42) also discerns it behind the practice of calling for dead comrades before leaving the country in which they fell; *e.g. Od* . 9.65–66.

reports nine such cenotaphs,[13] and Dio Cassius one.[14] A few have even survived,[15] and the Greek Anthology includes epitaphs from several more.[16] This shows that, in order to honour the memory of someone who had fallen in a distant land or, especially, of someone lost at sea,[17] their survivors often erected an 'empty tomb'.

As well as 'empty tombs' being erected for ordinary people, they were sometimes associated with a Hero: *e.g.* Achilles (Paus. 6.23.3), the Argives who fought at Troy but died on the way home (Paus. 2.20.6), Teiresias (Paus. 9.18.4), Odysseus (Plut. *QuaesGr.* 48, 302C), and Kalchas (Lycoph. 1047f). Iolaos had a Heroshrine (ἡρῷον) and mound (χῶμα) at Thebes, even though the local citizens admitted he died at Sardis (Paus. 9.23.1).

Should the 'empty tomb' of Jesus be understood alongside the empty tombs of the ancient world? In the first place, since many were erected for 'mere mortals', as we have seen, it is clear that an 'empty tomb' would not automatically declare the one memorialised to be a Hero. More importantly, there is also a crucial difference between these 'empty tombs' and that of Mark 16.

2. 'Empty Tombs' and Bodies

In every case, an empty tomb clearly presupposes not only that the person has died (the significance of which will become clear later), but also that their body is elsewhere[18]—be it buried or unburied. This is evidently an important criterion for Pausanias, who not only indicates when a grave must be a cenotaph—since it is in one place, but the body is elsewhere (1.2.2)—but also reports his careful inquiries in order to

[13]1.2.2 (Euripides); 2.20.6 (the Argives); 2.23.3 (Hyrnetho); 3.14.1 (Brasidas); 4.32.3 (Aristomenes); 6.20.16 (Myrtilus); 6.23.3 (Achilles); 9.18.4 (Teiresias); and 9.23.1 (Iolaos).

[14]For Drusus, on the Rhine; 55.2.3.

[15]IG V.1.736: Sparta: κενὸ[ς τάφος]; Delos.Rheneia 475: κενὸν ἠρίον; ISmyrna 512 (LSJ persistently calls it 234!): κενέωμα τάφου; IMylasa 435: [κε]ν[οτάφ]ιο[ν | Καλπουρν|ίου; IMylasa 469 κενοτά|φιν Φι|λήτου.

[16]*AG* 7.374, 395, 496, 497, 500.

[17]Delos.Rheneia 475; ?ISmyrna 512; *AG* 7.374, 395, 496, 497, 500.

[18]Excluding such cases as *AG* 8.229, where it is used in a grave curse to express that the grave is empty of anything valuable, but only contains bones.

determine whether or not a grave is 'occupied'. On one occasion he disbelieves the report that the grave contains Hyrnetho, and insists that it must be a cenotaph (2.23.3); on another he is surprised that it is not a cenotaph, but, upon inquiry, the locals inform him that they had acquired the bones of the occupant from Rhodes (4.32.3).

This is also true in the case of the 'empty tombs' associated with Hero cults. Rather than the Hero 'being recognised by the evidence of an empty grave', exactly the opposite was normally the case. Usually, the necessary prerequisite for a Hero-cult was the *possession* of his grave.

> It is implied, as a rule,...that the grave contains the bones of the Hero. The bones—all that is left of his mortality—chain the Hero to his grave...The possession of the mortal remains of the Hero secured the possession of the Hero himself....As a rule, it is the remains of his former body that hold him fast. But these remains are a part of the Hero himself; though dead (and mummified, as we are told in one case: Hdt ix, 120), he works and acts just the same; his psyche, his invisible counterpart and double, hovers in the neighbourhood of the body and the grave.[19]

Because they were so important, the grave was at times kept secret for the protection of the remains. At other times, the bones of a Hero were brought from the place of his death to the place of his cult. However, since a grave fixes a Hero to a specific location, in cases where the remains were not accessible an 'empty tomb' 'sometimes had to do duty for a grave. In such cases the Hero was perhaps thought of as bound by a spell to that place'.[20]

In every case, the 'empty tomb' simply serves as a focal point for the Hero's cult, even though it is clearly known that the Hero's body is at some other physical location. Perhaps surprisingly, the 'empty tombs' (*i.e.* the cenotaphs) that were occasionally associated with the Hero cults have proven to be

[19]Rohde, *Psyche*, 122. Given his treatment of the evidence, it is surprising that the attempt has been made to enlist Rohde in support of the empty grave = Hero thesis!

[20]Rohde, *Psyche*, 122. Hamilton ('Resurrection Tradition', 418) uses this quotation.

evidence that, as a necessary condition of those cults, a body was needed in a grave!

This means that, if Jesus was going to be portrayed as a Hero, his body would have to remain in the tomb, or be known to be at some other physical location. Only this set of circumstances would be consistent with the (highly unlikely) speculation that there was some kind of Hero cult at Jesus' grave.[21]

3. Jesus' Empty Tomb and his Body

The evidence shows that the 'empty tomb' in the case of the Hero is nothing like that of Jesus according to Mark 16.

The appearance of the women characters in both scenes (15:40–47; 16:1–8) ensures that the narrative presents the grave in which Jesus was buried as the same one which proves to be empty. The discussion regarding the removal of the stone (16:2–3), the report of its being removed (v. 4), the women's entrance into the tomb to discover the young man in white (v. 5), leading to the first notice of the woman's alarm (v. 5; *cf.* v. 8)—all these provide an elaborate build-up to the announcement from one who presumably is regarded as a reliable commentator that the tomb is empty: 'he is not here' (v. 6). To reinforce that this was the tomb in which he should have been found, the young man adds: 'see the place where they laid him'. Mark's 'empty tomb' is no substitute for an absent body, but it is a tomb which used to contain a body, but does so no more.

The young man's statements focus attention on the empty tomb, but the announcement of Jesus' resurrection which precedes them is also highly significant. His body is no longer in this tomb, or in any other tomb: he is risen.[22] The

[21]For a cult at the tomb, *cf.* the discussion in P. Perkins, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984) 93-94, 119, who agrees that there is no evidence for the veneration of the tomb. *Cf.* Gundry: 'Jewish Christians would have venerated the tomb had they thought it contained Jesus' remains. The lack of evidence that they did favours that from the start they knew it to be empty' [*i.e.*, in a non-Hero sense!] (*Mark*, 995).

[22]Hamilton ('Resurrection Tradition', 419) ignored this announcement, and focused on the command to go to Galilee and on Jesus' epithet 'of Nazareth', in an attempt to draw a parallel with the Hero, whose sphere of influence was localised. In doing so, he missed the glaringly obvious

announcement of Jesus' risen-ness raises the question whether Mark 16 should be understood against Greco-Roman notions of being translated.

III. Translation?

What of the 'Heroes' translated 'from amongst men', to another place? Were there some whose body did not remain in the grave?

1. Normal Translations

In the usual translation motif, the person is granted the privilege of avoiding death, which means that there is no mention of a grave, let alone an empty one. This is so for the Jewish translations of Enoch[23] and Elijah.[24] It is also the norm for Greco-Roman translations: Ganymede,[25] Herakles,[26] Empedocles,[27] Romulus,[28] Semiramis,[29] Aristeas,[30] Euthymos,[31] and Apollonius.[32] It is also worth noting that the translated ones were not usually regarded as Heroes but, because they were immortalised, they were usually considered to have become gods (*i.e.* 'apotheosis').[33]

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point that the Hero was localised *at his tomb*, and Jesus' tomb was near Jerusalem. Instead, the command (v. 7) is confirmation that he has risen.

[23]Gn. 5:24; 2 Ki 2:1–14; Sir. 44:16; 49:14; Heb. 11:5; *1 En.* 70:1–4; *2 En.* 1 *et passim*; *3 En. incipit*; *Vit. Proph.* 21:15.

[24]2 Ki. 2; contrast Josephus' account of Moses, *Jewish Ant.* 4.326.

[25]*Il.* 20.232ff; Hdn. 1.11.2.

[26]Hes. *Theog.* 950ff; Pind. *N.*1, 61ff.

[27]D.L. 8.68–69; although even his translation was disputed.

[28]*E.g.* Plut. *Rom.* 27–28.

[29]Diod. Sic. 2.14.3 and 20.1.

[30]Hdt. 4.14.

[31]Paus. 6.6.10.

[32]Philostr. *VitAp.* 8.31. Apparently coining his own word, Philostratus does not know of 'encountering either tomb or "false-tomb" (τάφῳ μὲν ἢ ψευδοταφίῳ...προστυχών)' for Apollonius anywhere, even though he has travelled widely.

[33]Hamilton ('Resurrection Tradition', 418f) illustrates the tendency to move from apotheosis to Hero-isation, with no hint that the two concepts were different! Note, however, that the sources sometimes regard Herakles as a Hero and at other times as divine.

2. Translations with 'Tombs'

There are, however, several exceptions to this norm in which Heroes were apparently translated after they died. Rohde observed that 'it was not considered a contradiction to erect cenotaphs, not only to those whose bodies were irrecoverable, but also to Heroes whose bodies had been translated',[34] In support, he cited only two stories: (1) The version of Achilles' end in the Aithiopis, in which he is snatched from the funeral pyre by Thetis; and (2) the story of Herakles in Diodorus Siculus, in which Herakles, after he has been struck by lightning and snatched up into the sky, has a mound (χῶμα) made for him, though no bones were found upon the pyre (πυρά).[35]

With regard to the first example, Rohde himself argues that the Aithiopis boldly introduces the idea of translation, but retains the reference to the mound 'evidently [as] a concession to the older narrative, which knew nothing of the translation of the body but gives prominence to the grave-mound' (*cf. Od.* 24.47ff). The result is a confusion of motifs which should properly be distinguished from each other. The same confusion can be detected in the second account. If Mark constructed his account on the basis of some such precedent, then he has followed a confused template, and Mark 16 joins the ranks of this small group of stories which confuse the Hero with the translated.

But, in any case, these two exceptions have marked dissimilarities to Mark's account. In both, the body never made it to the grave, whereas Mark's story very clearly provides a proper burial for Jesus before emptying the grave of his body. In both stories, the translation happens at the moment of the funeral, and the mound is very clearly constructed after the translation, purely as a memorial—since all concerned are aware that the body is not there and never has been; accordingly, these stories are closely related to the other 'empty tombs' and, therefore, this increases the distance from Mark 16.

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[34]Rohde, *Psyche*, 65 n. 29.

[35]Diod. Sic. 4.38.5; 39.1. The similarity of these two stories, in which there is a translation but also a grave-memorial, to the apotheosis of the Roman emperors is apparent. I have more to say about Mark's relationship with the notion of the apotheosis of the emperors in my Ph.D. thesis (currently being researched at King's College, London), but will not go into it here.

Jesus rises after being placed dead in the tomb, on the third day, and he is raised from out of the tomb.

But this makes his case similar to two other exceptional stories.

3. Translation from a 'Tomb'

Kleomedes of Astypalaia was disqualified after killing his opponent in a boxing match at the 71st Olympic festival. Enraged, he returned home and tore down the pillar supporting the roof of a boys school, killing the boys. He fled to Athena's temple and hid in a chest. When it was broken open, he was not found inside it. The oracle informed the envoys that he had become a Hero— indeed, the last of the Heroes[36]—and that he should be honoured with sacrifice (Paus. 6.9.6–7; Plut. *Rom.* 28). Although called a 'Hero', this is probably only in the later derivative sense, rather than being a true Hero of the Hero-cult.[37] Be that as it may, the significance of the story is its combination of the notion of Hero, with the ancient notion of translation of individual mortals who disappear without dying.[38]

The stark difference from Mark 16 is obvious: Kleomedes does not die, and he has no grave. Rather than being an 'empty grave' story, this is clearly a variant upon the normal translation story.

The other story which can be considered a variant upon the translation theme is the incident in which the body of Alkmene disappears from the bier, and a stone substituted (*e.g.* Plut. *Rom.* 28.6–8). Here she has died, but never receives burial; her disappearance occurs before the event. It is also of interest that she had no tomb at all (Paus. 9.16.7); she 'receives divine honours' (τιμῶν ἰσοθέων ἔτυχε), rather than those as to a Hero.[39]

[36]Rohde comments wryly: 'Indeed, it might well appear time to close at last the already over-lengthy list of "Heroes". The Delphic oracle had itself contributed largely to their increase, and with full intent; nor did it observe for long its own decision to make an end now' (*Psyche*, 130).

[37]Rohde: 'He could, however, only be called a "Hero" because there was no common name to describe the effect of translation which made men no longer mortals nor yet gods' (*Psyche*, 130).

[38]Rohde, *Psyche*, 129.

[39]In which case the language would be different; for example, the verb ἐναγίζω would be used. The two types of offerings ('as to a god', and 'as to a Hero') followed completely different procedures.

In short, she does not seem to be a Hero, but she has been translated and experienced apotheosis; she has become a god.

In contrast, Jesus arises out of the tomb, in which he had been lying for the span of three days. The word ἠγέρθη, 'he is risen', does not fit a translation,[40] since the translation involved either the avoidance of death or at least one's removal at the point of the funeral. Instead, Mark clearly shows Jesus dying and being buried, with the clear intention of being raised from death. According to Mark's presentation, Jesus has already refused the opportunity of an apotheosis (along the more normal lines), when he came down the mountain of transfiguration (Mk. 9:2–13). Mark 16 does not describe an apotheosis; it was a resurrection from the dead.

IV. Jesus the Hero?

Mark 16:1–8 may well grab the attention of a reader attuned to the usually quite separate notions of the Hero cult and of translation. However, such a reader would also notice the very clear differences in Mark's account. Jesus' genuinely empty tomb (*i.e.* empt-*ied* tomb) prevents him from being regarded as a Hero. The fact that he died, and was buried for some time, ensures that he genuinely joined the dead, and was not given the luxury of a translation away from death. Mark does not provide Jesus with an apotheosis, but the narrative insists that the Jesus 'who was crucified' experienced resurrection: 'He is risen. He is not here.'

This is no Hero's tomb; nor is it the tomb of some fortunate who has found a way around death for himself and himself alone. This tomb is that of the Son of Man, whose emptied tomb is pregnant with hope for the many.

[40]Noted even by Bickermann, 'Das leere Grab', 286. Narratives used a range of language to refer to translations, *e.g.* the notion of disappearing, or becoming invisible, (ἀφανιζ-) is frequent; if divinisation was involved, the ἀποθεωσ- or ἐκθεα- groups could be used; phrases expressing the changed location also occur ('from amongst men'/ 'to amongst the gods').

Chapter 5

JESUS, THE DAIMONS AND THE DEAD

Peter G. Bolt

Introduction[1]

Although it would be a rare reader today who would equate the 'demons' exorcised by Jesus with ghosts, *i.e.* spirits of deceased human beings who still exert an influence upon the living, many ancient readers of the Gospels would have done so automatically.

Part I of this paper will show that many people in the Greco-Roman world would simply assume the connection between *daimons* and the spirits of the dead.[2] Part II then asks what they would have made of Mark's exorcism scenes, with this connection as part of their repertoire.

I. *Daimons* and the Dead in the Greco-Roman World

1.1 Greco-Roman Sources

In order to demonstrate how the *daimons* were connected with the dead, this section consists of a vocabulary study of the δαίμων / δαιμόνιον family. Although this approach may have its weaknesses,[3] it is more than sufficient to establish the point at hand.[4] In an attempt to allow the meaning of the terms to emerge from the discussion of the usage, I have adopted the practice of simply referring to the word group using the transliteration '*daimons*', rather than the much more metaphysically loaded '*demons*'.

The link between the *daimons* and the dead is a persistent feature of the literary sources.[5]

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[1]The topic of this paper forms part of my doctoral dissertation, currently being researched at King's College, London, where an earlier version of this paper was presented.

The following abbreviations are used: ANET = J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: University Press,1969³); DT = A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris, 1904); DTA = R. Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae* (IG III App.; Berlin: G. Reimerum, 1897); GMA = R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets. The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae Part 1: Published Texts of Known Provenance* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 22/1; Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1994); GMPT = H.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986²); Isbell = C.D. Isbell (ed.), *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (SBLDS 17; Missoula: Scholars, 1975); LSSupp = F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques, Supplément* (Paris: De Boccard, 1962); PGM = K. Preisendanz & A. Henrichs, *Papyrae Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: 1972, 1973); PDM = H.D. Betz, as above, Demotic Spells; SGD = D.R. Jordan, 'A Survey of Greek Defixiones not included in the special corpora', *GRBS* 26 (1985) 151–197; SuppMag = R.W. Daniel & F. Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum* (=Papyrologica Coloniensia 16; Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1990–1992).

[2]Surveys of biblical *daimon*ology have regularly noticed the connection, even if only to deny it: *e.g.* W. Foerster, 'δαίμων, κτλ', in G. Kittel, (ed.), *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), II.6; G.H. Twelftree, 'Demon, Devil, Satan', in J.B. Green & S. McKnight, (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Leicester & Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 164; J.J. Rousseau & R. Arav, 'Exorcism', *Jesus and His World. An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 88.

i. Literature

Metaphysical confusion surrounding the *daimonic* is not only a part of the modern world but it exists in the literature of the ancient world as well.

> More and more the word [*i.e. daimon*] came to mean lesser spirits and spirits intermediate between men and [...] the gods. However, it was not certain that they were not simply the spirits of deceased men or men about to be incarnated, and thus enormous confusion as to their existence, role, and origin was to be found.[6]

Of course, as we shall see below, the two are not necessarily strict

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[3]*E.g.* (1) The evidence for Greco-Roman *daimon*ology may be more extensive than simply this one word study. Nevertheless, the word study is certainly a grand opening to the field.

(2) Like the LXX and Josephus, the Gospel accounts prefer δαιμόνιον, to what some have suggested is the more loaded term, δαίμων. However, a survey of the terms outside the Bible, suggests that the terms are very closely related, often synonomous. This observation gains support from the variants on the five occurrences of δαίμων in the NT MSS (Mt. 8:31, *cf.* Mk. 5:12; Lk. 8:29; Rev. 16:14, 18:2), and also from the Fathers' common use of δαίμων when explaining Gospel passages which use δαιμόνιον.

(3) It has been argued that Mark's preference is against the δαιμ- vocabulary, in favour of 'unclean spirit'. However, this appears to be an overstatement of the evidence. Mark uses δαιμονίζεσθαι (1:32, 5:15, 16, 18) always as a substantive participle and in his narration; δαιμόνιον four times in summaries (1:34, 34, 39, 6:13) and twice in his narration (3:15, 7:30, [16:9]), as well as four times in the mouths of others (3:22; 7:26, 29; 9:38, [16:17]). On the other hand, πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον appears as part of Mark's narration six times (1:23, 26; 5:2, 13; 6:7; 7:25) and only once in his summaries (3:11), as well as being thrice in the mouths of others (1:27; 3:30; 5:8). In chapter 9 he also refers to πνεῦμα ἄλαλον: 9:17, 20, 25; (καὶ κωφόν) 9:25. His usage of the δαιμ- group is sufficiently frequent and intertwined with 'unclean spirit' to ensure that his Greco-Roman readers would refer both to the same beings. This justifies my blurring of the categories for the sake of the argument.

The expression 'unclean spirit/*daimon*' is extremely rare outside the Gospels: twice in the (LXX Zech. 13:2; 1 Macc. 1:48 ℵ), and but once in the Gk. intertestamental material (TBenj. 5:2). An Ethiopic equivalent once in Jub (10:1), and a Hebrew equivalent twice at Qumran (1QS 4.21–22; 11Q5[11QPs^a] 19.13–15), and occasionally in the Rabbis, where it is clearly associated with magic. It is non-existent in the Greek materials not dependant on the Biblical writings, although it approximates the Pythagorean notion of 'unclean souls', which were apparently related to *daimons* and heroes (D.L. 8.31–32); *cf.* Plut. *De gen.* 591C, where the unclean souls are not accepted in the upper regions. If readers made such an association, the case argued here would be strengthened.

alternatives, for the intermediate spirits could well have originated from deceased humans. But clearly part of the 'confusion' detected here is due to the *daimons'* link with the spirits of the dead.

There is no hint of this link in Homer[7] (pre-700 BC), but he uses *daimon* sparingly anyway, prompting the suggestion that beliefs regarding the *daimons* belong to the uneducated lower classes, the upper educated class preferring the anthropomorphic gods.[8]

Hesiod (pre-700 BC) argues that when the men of the golden age died they were transformed to become watchers over humanity (*Op.*, 121ff.), called 'pure *daimons* dwelling upon the earth' (τοὶ δαίμονες ἀγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι).[9] They 'roam everywhere over the earth, clothed in mist and keep watch on judgements and cruel deeds, givers of wealth'. Since this passage from Hesiod becomes the point of departure for later discussions, it is worth noting that, even at this early stage, *daimons* are clearly intermediate spirits who are spirits of the departed, albeit the 'departed golden race'.

As well as bearing witness to the emergence of the term *daimon* being applied to various named gods and being associated with *tyche* (fate, fortune),[10] and fostering the idea of *daimones* as *alastores* or

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[4]Casting the net more widely simply strengthens the case. Note, for example, the Egyptian charm for an exorcism against a headache, c. 1250–1100 BC, which calls upon the gods/spirits 'to remove that enemy, dead man or dead woman, adversary male or female which is in the face of N, born of M.' (BMPap. 10685C). The Semitic context provides many examples of ghosts operating in ways that require 'exorcism': *cf.* R.C. Thompson, *Semitic Magic. Its Origins and Development* (New York: Ktav, 1908 repr. 1971), 2–38, and *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Being Babylnian and Assyrian Incantations against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits, which attack Mankind. Vol .1: Evil Spirits* (London: Luzac, 1903); and J.A. Scurlock, *Magical Means of Dealing with Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1988). In addition, three of the later Aramaic Incantation Bowls also include an invocation to a 'ghost', שלניתא, Isbell 12.2, 13.4, 19.7.

[5]It can be detected elsewhere, *e.g.* in the *nekromanteia* and *nekyomanteia*, places where one could consult the soul of the dead man, found throughout Greece, and in grave inscriptions; F.E. Brenk, 'In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period' in W. Haase (ed.), *ANRW* II.16.3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 2071, 2143.

[6]Brenk, 'Light', 2068–69. M. Smith, 'The Occult in Josephus', in L.H. Feldman & G. Hata, (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1987) 240-41, detects a similar confusion in Josephus.

[7]Brenk, 'Light', 2075. Neither are they a class of spirits.

[8]So Chantraine, reported in Brenk, 'Light', 2081.

[9]In Plato *Crat.* 398A, MSS BT read ὑποχθόνιοι, *'under the earth '*, against vulg. ἐπιχθόνιοι.

avenging spirits,[11] Greek tragedy (early 5th c. BC +) contains several references to them as spirits of the departed.[12]

As for the New Comedy (last quarter 4th c. to the death of Philemon 264/3), Menander[13] has the notion that each man is guided by a *daimon*, whether good or evil, which may perhaps be an adaptation of an earlier belief.[14] If so, it should be recognised that this concept logically precedes the *daimon* as the spirit of the departed. It is, for example, the necessary presupposition of the hero-cult that it is the *daimon* by which a person lived which is still active once they die.

Although the picture becomes increasingly complex when we come to the philosophical literature, given the various elaborations of the *daimons'* role as intermediate beings, the link with the spirits of the dead is still present. Plato (429–347 BC) certainly used *daimon* of divinity and fate, and regarded the *daimons* as intermediate beings. He especially promoted the concept of the personal *daimon* which controls the fate of each individual.[15] Plato's elaboration of the *daimons* as intermediate beings, although based on earlier hints,[16] was still fairly innovative.[17] Since a distinction between a person's post-mortem soul and their personal *daimon* can be detected at a number of points in his

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[10]Brenk, 'Light', 2082–83. Consistently in Sophocles; occasionally attested in the inscriptional evidence (p. 2143).

[11]*E.g.* Aesch. *Pers.* 354.

[12]Aesch. *Pers.* 620ff. Atossa's libations are to 'summon up the *daimon* of Dareios' τόν τε δαίμονα Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε, 'the glorious *daimon*' δαίμονα μεγαυχῆ (642), who is a 'soul from below' ἔνερθεν ψυχήν (630) — and, as someone murdered by his relatives, was a good candidate to become a ghost; *Cf.* Aesch. *Cho.* 125, where Electra, invoking her father, tells Hermes: 'summon for me the *daimons* beneath the earth' κηρύξας τοὺς γῆς ἔνερθε δαίμονας. In Eur. *Alc.* 1003, the chorus says of Alcestis: 'now she is a blessed *daimon*' νῦν δ' ἐστὶ μάκαιρα δαίμων, and Hercules, victorious over Death, says 'I closed in conflict with the Lord of *daimons*' μάχην συνάψας δαιμόνων τῷ κυρίῳ (1140; *cf.* 843–4).

[13]'By every man at birth a δαίμων stands, A guide of virtue for life's mysteries', cited in Plutarch, *De tranquillitate animi* 474B. Plutarch disagrees in favour of Empedocles' notion that there are two forces mingled within each person.

[14]Brenk, 'Light', 2084, who, on the basis of Phokylides in ClemA *Strom.* 5.14.127, suggests that Menander may have had a dualistic notion; contrast previous note.

[15]*E.g. Ti.* 90A–C. *Cf.* the famous δαιμόνιον which guided Socrates' destiny.

[16]Plutarch (Cleombrotus) dates the theory to Hesiod's four-fold distinction of beings, *Op.*, 121ff. (*De defectu* 415B).

[17]*Cf.* Bravo's comment on *Symp.* 202D–203A: 'la théorie du démonique esquissée dans ce passage ne correspond nullement aux croyances ni aux pratiques normales du temps de Platon ou d'époques plus anciennes,' B. Bravo, 'Une Tablette Magique D'Olbia Pontique, les Morts, les Héros et les Démons', *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant* (Paris: EHESS, 1987) 208.

writing, the two are not always identical for Plato. But the two views are by no means in opposition, for, as noted above, this concept is logically prior to *daimons* as the spirits of the dead. Alongside his generally more elaborate *daimon*ology, Plato still allows Socrates to conclude that Hesiod

> ... and all the other poets are right, who say that when a good man dies he has a great portion and honour among the dead, and becomes a *daimon*, [...]. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is *daimon*ic (δαιμόνιον), and rightly called a *daimon* (δαίμονα). (Plato, *Cratylus*, 398B–C)

Here the personal *daimon* appears to be derived from the older understanding of the *daimon* as the spirit of the (heroic?) dead (*cf.* *Phaedo* 107D–108B; *Resp* 469A, *cf.* 427B, 540C; *Leg.* 717B–718A).[18]

While continuing the idea of the *daimons* as intermediate beings, both Xenocrates (head of the Academy 339–314 BC), and the greatly influential Posidonius (c. 135–51/50 BC), called the souls of the departed δαίμονες. A previous incarnation is implied by Xenocrates' notion of a 'survival':[19]

> εἰσὶ γὰρ, ὡς ἐν ἀνθρώποις, καὶ δαίμοσιν ἀρετῆς διαφοραί, καὶ τοῦ παθητικοῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀμαυρὸν ἔτι λείψανον ὥσπερ περίττωμα, τοῖς δὲ πολὺ καὶ δυσκατάσβεστον ἔνεστιν
>
> For, as among men, so also among the *daimons*, there are different degrees of excellence, and in regard to the things of the passions, in some there is a weak and shadowy remainder, the dregs, as it were, but in others this is excessive and hard to extinguish. (Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 417B)

Although the Stoics in general avoided the δαιμ- vocabulary, Posidonius apparently taught that

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[18]H.D. Betz, 'The Delphic Maxim "Know Yourself" in the Greek Magical Papyri', *History of Religion* 21/2 (1981) 158: 'the older concept of the soul as *daimon* (δαίμων or δαιμόνιον) had become highly important in the Socratic and Platonic traditions of thought, especially because of its connection with the so-called *daimonion* of Socrates.' He points out that later Philosophy discussed whether this *daimon* was to be simply identified with the self and the soul.

[19]'Daraus folgt doch wohl, daß die Dämonen einst Menschenseelen waren; denn ein ~~leivyanon~~ kann das Unvernünftige nur aus dem irdischen Leben der Seele sein,' R. Heinze, *Xenocrates. Darstellung der Lehre und Sammlung der Fragmente* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1892, repr. 1965) 83.

> εἰ οὖν διαμένουσιν αἱ ψυχαί, δαίμοσιν αἱ αὐταὶ γίνονται
>
> If then souls persist, the same souls become *daimons* (Sextus Empericus 9.74 = Loeb III.I.74)[20]

In addition, according to Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics (?Posidonius) — with evident reliance upon Hesiod —

> φασὶ δ' εἶναι καί τινας δαίμονας ἀνθρώπων συμπάθειαν ἔχοντας, ἐπόπτας τῶν ἀνθρωπείων πραγμάτων· καὶ ἥρωας τὰς ὑπολελειμμένας τῶν σπουδαίων ψυχάς
>
> ... hold that there are *daimons* who are in sympathy with mankind and watch over human affairs. They believe too in heroes, that is, the souls of the righteous that have survived their bodies. (Diogenes Laertius, 7.151)

Evidence from Plutarch (AD 50–120+) indicates that such ideas persisted in philosophical circles into and beyond the time of the NT period. During the extended discussion of *daimon*ological views in *De defectu oraculorum*, it is clear that the same connection is still known and debated.

For example, Ammonius believed Hesiod to have made the connection, when he asks: 'Do you think that the *daimons* are something other than *souls* that make their rounds (οἴει ἕτερόν τι τοὺς δαίμονας ἢ ψυχὰς ὄντας περιπολεῖν), according to Hesiod, in mist apparelled' (431B). Although inserting a Platonic touch,[21] Lamprias' reply indicates that Ammonius agrees with Hesiod's conception in this regard (431E): 'if the souls which have been severed from a body, or have had no part with one at all, are *daimons* according to you and the divine Hesiod ...' Both Hesiod and Ammonius evidently believe that at least some of the *daimons* are those of the deceased. Lamprias is also happy to indulge this opinion, as long as he can argue that any power the soul possesses after death, it also possesses before death, even if in much diminished form due to being blinded by its combination with the mortal (431E ff.).[22]

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[20]Heinze, *Xenocrates*, 98 comments: '... d.h. nicht: "so werden sie den Dämonen gleich" — denn dann müßte die Existenz von Dämonen schon bewiesen sein — sondern: "so werden sie das, was man gemeinhin unter Dämonen versteht." Danach sind also die Dämonen des Posidonius, wie die des Xenokrates, abgeschiedene Seelen.'

[21]*Cf.* 1. the phrase 'or have had no part with one at all', alluding to pre-incarnate souls; and, 2. the notion of the personal *daimon*.

Later in the same essay 'which goes so much into this *daimon* lore',[23] Cleombrotus first commends 'those who place the race of *daimons* midway between gods and men' (οἱ τὸ τῶν δαιμόνων γένος ἐν μέσῳ θέντες θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων) (415A), before suggesting various possibilities for the origin of this idea: perhaps Zoroastrian, or Thracian (Orphic), or Egyptian or Phrygian. In justifying the latter two he states that this can be inferred from the mystery initiation rites of both lands (ταῖς ἑκατέρωθι τελεταῖς), since they exhibit 'many things mortal and mournful being mixed' (ἀναμεμειγμένα πολλὰ θνητὰ καὶ πένθιμα). This evidently assumes that the *daimons* are in some way connected with 'things mortal and mournful',[24] and, since it is the observable evidence upon which his case for *daimons* is built, this connection appears to be obvious to all those involved in the conversation.

In summing up his discussion of *De def. orac.* Brenk states:

> [Plutarch's] speakers refuse to abandon the contention that *daimones* are really the souls of the departed. Two strands then clearly emerge, *daimones* as independent spirits, and as the souls of the departed, and it is fair to say that the strands could never be completely unravelled once they had become entangled.[25]

Although these strands should not be so opposed as to make them completely distinct, both are clearly present. Just as surely as the *daimons* are beings between the mortal and the immortal, so too are they connected with the souls of the dead.

Plutarch's other writings further illustrate this connection, despite it being somewhat peripheral to his own more elaborate Platonic *daimon*ology. In *Symp.* III.7 (655E) he alludes to the custom 'amongst us' (παρ' ἡμῖν) of sacrificing to Agathos Daimon, which was a chthonic spirit and guardian of the house, perhaps originally a ghost. Elsewhere, he reports the visit of Euthynoüs to a ψυχομαντεῖον (a place

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[22]The idea that the incarnated soul is the weaker can be contrasted with Homer's view that 'the shades' were of much diminished power in comparison to that possessed in mortal life (*Il* 23:103–104; *Od* 11.475–76). G.J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered. Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 56, detects increasing substantiality in the shades by the second Nekyia, *Od* 24.15–204, and into the Aeneid. This can also be detected in the curse tablets; see below.

[23]Brenk, 'Light', 2082.

[24]Brenk, 'Light', 2123–24; Plutarch insists that the mysteries show the true nature of *daimons*.

[25]Brenk, 'Light', 2082. Cleombrotus probably represents the views Plutarch is opposing (p. 2122).

where the dead are conjured up), and the appearance of a young man who said 'δαίμων τοῦ υἱέος σου', 'I am the ghost of your son' ([*Cons. ad Apoll.*] 109C–D). When a plague raged amongst the Romans, it was averted when Apollo gave an oracle instructing them to appease the wrath of Saturn and 'the spirits of those who had perished unlawfully' τοὺς δαίμονας τῶν ἀνόμως ἀπολομένων (*Parall. Graec. et Rom.* 308A) — such people being prime candidates for becoming ghosts.[26] The Romans' ancestral spirits, the Lares, are called '*daimons* of punishment like the Furies' (ἐρινυώδεις τινές εἰσι καὶ ποίνιμοι δαίμονες), (*Quaest. Rom* #51, 277A). One of the Sayings of the Spartans (236D) tells of a person who passed a grave-mound at night: 'A certain *daimon* having become visible' (φαντασιωθεὶς δαιμόνιόν τι), he ran at it with his spear saying: 'Whither shall you flee me, soul who is about to die twice?' (πῇ με φεύγεις, δὶς ἀποθανουμένη ψυχή ...).[27]

The interplay between souls and *daimons* is even present in the essays containing fairly elaborate *daimon*ology. The vision of *De facie* (944C) pictures the largest hollow on the moon, 'Hecate's Recess', 'where the souls suffer and exact penalties for whatever they have endured or committed after having already become *daimons*, ὅπου καὶ δίκας διδόασιν αἱ ψυχαὶ καὶ λαμβάνουσιν ὧν ἂν ἤδη γεγενημέναι δαίμονες ἢ πάθωσιν ἢ δράσωσι. The next section explains that the *daimons* (οἱ δαίμονες) do not stay forever on the moon, but are assigned various roles in regard to oracles and the mysteries, and as punishers and saviours. If these acts are not performed properly, 'they are cast out upon earth again confined in human bodies.' In the vision of the other world provided by *De gen.* (591C), the moon is said to be 'belonging to terrestrial *daimons*' (δαιμόνων ἐπιχθονίων οὖσα, *cf.* Hesiod, *Op.*, 121ff.). Timarchus sees stars, but his guide replies (591D) 'without knowing it, you see the *daimons* themselves' (αὐτοὺς τοὺς δαίμονας ὁρῶν ἀγνοεῖς). He then explains the relationship between the soul and the body, saying that the part submerged in the body is called the soul (ψυχή), whereas the part left free from corruption is called the understanding (νοῦς), by 'those who take it to be within themselves, ...

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[26]Those who died a violent (βιαιοθάνατοι) or sudden or early death (ἄωροι) were especially likely to become ghosts. The spirits of such people are regularly invoked in the magical material.

[27]The Spartan no doubt simply intended to get rid of the ghost; for dying twice in Plutarch's more Platonic thought; *cf.* 'As to the death we die, one death reduces man from three factors [*i.e.* body, soul, mind] to two and another reduces him from two to one [*i.e.* mind] ...' (*De facie* 943A). *Cf.* Plato's 'mortal soul' (*Ti.* 42D, 61C, 69C–D).

but those who conceive the matter rightly call it a *daimon*, as being external' (591E).[28] The discussion clearly links the souls with the *daimons*: whereas the stars that are extinguished are souls which sink back to the body, the stars that are lighted are souls that 'float back from the body after death'; and the ones that move on high are 'the *daimons* of men said to possess understanding' (591F). The same essay (593DE), after recalling Hesiod that δαίμονές εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμελεῖς, draws an analogy between a retired athlete who still encourages those in training, and 'those who are done with the contests of life, and who, from prowess of soul, have become *daimons*' (οἱ πεπαυμένοι τῶν περὶ τὸν βίον ἀγώνων δι' ἀρετὴν ψυχῆς γενόμενοι δαίμονες).[29] The analogy 'indicates once more that for Plutarch *daimones* seem primarily to be former souls.'[30]

One of the parallels between the lives of Brutus and Dion was that both saw a phantom which told of their coming death (*Dion* 2). The phantom, φάσμα — also called τὸ δαιμόνιον (12) — appearing to Brutus (*Caes.* 49.11) has all the signs of being a ghost. It is heralded by a noise, and, when Brutus looks towards the lamp which was going out,[31] 'he saw a fearful vision of a man of unnatural size and harsh aspect'. The phantom tells Brutus that he is his δαίμων κακός ('evil daimon', *cf. Brut.* 36–37). Although he usually assigns such stories to superstition, because of the standing of these two men Plutarch complains

> οὐκ οἶδα μὴ τῶν πάνυ παλαιῶν τὸν ἀτοπώτατον ἀναγκασθῶμεν προσδέχεσθαι λόγον, ὡς τὰ φαῦλα δαιμόνια καὶ βάσκανα, προσφθονοῦντα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνιστάμενα, ταραχὰς καὶ φόβους ἐπάγει, σείοντα καὶ σφάλλοντα τὴν ἀρετήν, ὡς μὴ διαμείναντες ἀπτῶτες ἐν τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀκέραιοι βελτίονος ἐκείνων μοίρας μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τύχωσιν.
>
> I do not know but we shall be compelled to accept that most

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[28]*Cf.* Plato, *Ti.* 90A: 'As regards the lordly kind of our soul, ... we declare that God has given to each of us, as his *daimon*, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us ... up from earth towards our kindred in the heaven.'

[29]*Cf. De I et O* 360EF.

[30]Brenk, 'Light', 2124.

[31]This is the moment when such a fearful vision would be expected; *cf.* the Britons saying (419F): 'as a lamp when it is being lighted has no terrors, but when it goes out is distressing to many, so ...' The editor refers to a saying by Lucretius 'a smouldering lamp may cause apoplexy'. In the magical papyri, lamps are often used in conjuring spirits.

> extraordinary doctrine of the oldest times, that mean and malignant *daimons*, in envy of good men and opposition to their deeds, try to confound and terrify them, causing their virtue to rock and totter, in order that they may not continue erect and inviolate in the path of honour and so attain a better portion after death than themselves [the *daimons*]. (*Dion* 2)

In the assumption that the *daimons* are similar to those who will die, and that those who will die will be like the *daimons*, Plutarch implies fairly clearly that the *daimons* are spirits of the dead and vice versa. This text not only provides the *modus operandi* of these spirits, i.e. terrifying and confounding good men, but it also explains the rationale for this behaviour in terms of the afterlife. These spirits of the dead seek to ruin the performance of the living so that their post-mortem lot is worse than that of the spirits themselves. In other words, in the opinion of the ancients — an opinion which, on the basis of the experience of Dion and Brutus, Plutarch, albeit tentatively,[32] commends to his contemporaries — not only are the *daimons* spirits in the afterlife who are malevolently active in this world, but this activity is also directed towards the fate of others in the afterlife who are themselves potential *daimons*.

Plutarch is immensely important as a source for ancient *daimon*ological views,[33] and has played such a key role in *daimon*ological studies that it is perhaps true to say that modern studies have not progressed beyond his own presentation.[34] It is significant for the purposes of my argument, therefore, that alongside the presence of the *daimons* as intermediate beings, his writings also illustrate the connection between the *daimon*s and the spirits of the dead,[35] which may, in fact, be his most basic belief.[36]

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[32]Brenk, 'Light', 2128f., suggests that he critiques this view (from ?Chrysippos), *cf. Brut.* 37, but the language seems to indicate a tentative suggestion.

[33]From him 'much of literary demonology in the early Imperial period has to be drawn', Brenk, 'Light', 2082'

[34]J.Z. Smith, 'Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Historic and Roman Antiquity', in W. Haase, (ed.), *ANRW* II.16.1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978) 436, finds this remarkable.

[35]Other texts may also be relevant: *e.g.* in *Cam.* 21.2, are the men opting to join the departed spirits by staying in the city?; or texts with potential magical allusions, which therefore suggest that the *daimon* referred to is a spirit of the dead (*Crass.* 22.4; *Pub.* 13.4, *cf.* curse tablets against charioteers?).

[36]Brenk, 'Light', 2125: 'most important of all for Plutarch's general conception or tendency in his writing is the understanding of *daimones* as former souls'; *cf.* 2124, 2127f.

To sum up the discussion thus far: it can be argued that the continued presence of the connection between the *daimons* and the dead in the philosophical literature, alongside the more elaborate emergent *daimon*ology, may indicate that 'even these circles had to orientate themselves by popular ideas', despite combatting, or seek to move beyond them.[37]

Evidently, these popular ideas were persistent and strong, especially for the person who was, in Deissman's phrase, '... a mere loafer at the docks, leading a vegetable existence, [...] with no religion except for a belief in daemons'![38] The connection is particularly clear in magical practice, where the attempt to enlist the aid of infernal *daimons* is clearly an attempt to utilize the powers of the dead.

ii. Magical Practices

Using bizarre imagery, Morton Smith pointed out that:

> [t]he intellectuals, the authors and readers of literary and scientific texts, are a tiny upper class, the thin, brilliant skin of a soap bubble filled with smoke. [...] The surface of the soap bubble reflects the brilliant scene of the Roman Empire — consuls, armies and client kings, cities, temples, and theaters [*sic*]. Through these reflections we catch only glimpses of the dark cloud behind them.[39]

The dark cloud to which he refers is the realm of the occult. Despite the fact that the occult 'although popular, is not fashionable in [modern] academic, rationalistic circles .... the ancient world lies mostly in that twilight zone of popular beliefs.'

In this realm, two types of magic can be distinguished: the spiritistic and the natural. Although

> 'natural magic' shows no explicit connection with spirits, ghosts, demons, or gods [, ...] in the case of the spiritistic type of magic, the ghosts of the dead are called up by the necromancer to give oracles or to discover hidden treasures. They are also sent to enter into the

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[37]Foerster, 'δαίμων', 1; *cf.* 3–6.
[38]A. Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East. The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927) 247.
[39]Smith, 'Occult', 236.

> bodies of men, to afflict them with diseases and to cure them; and in many other ways they are forced to do the will of the magician, whose spells and incantations are held to be powerful enough to control the will of such spirits.[40]

Although regarded suspiciously at official levels, such magic was widespread in the ancient world at more private — or even underground — levels of society.[41] It could be innocuous, or positive (as in desperate attempts to ward off disease), but it could also be malevolent[42] (as epitomised by the curse tablets).

a) The Magical Sources

The Magical sources illustrate spiritistic magic at work. Although the magical papyri are mostly later than the NT period,[43] they are nevertheless useful for comparative purposes, since it is highly probable that they represent collections of much earlier material,[44] and magical practices were conservative,[45] or even reactionary.[46] The curse tablets provide further support that some of the practices in the

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[40]E. Langton, *Good and Evil Spirits. A Study of the Jewish and Christian Doctrine, its Origin and Development* (London: SPCK, 1942) 42, in reverse.

[41]R.M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), 105. For sanctions against magic see C.R.I. Phillips, *'Nullum Crimen sine Lege*: Socioreligious Sanctions on Magic', in C.A. Faraone & D. Obbink, (eds.), *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic & Religion* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[42]Such magic was a socially unacceptable means to protecting or procuring socially acceptable ends (*e.g.* success in family, business); *cf.* H.S. Versnel, 'Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers', *Magika Hiera*, 62ff.

[43]At least four are earlier: a curse (PGM XL, 4th c. BC [GMPT: 4th c. AD sic!]); a charm against headache/inflammation, (PGM XX, 2nd/1st c. BC) and two love charms (PMonGr inv 216 = GMPT CXVII, 1st c. BC; SuppMag 72 = GMPT CXXII, Augustan). W. Brashear, 'The Greek Magical Papyri: an Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)', in W. Haase, (ed.), *ANRW* II.18.5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 3491f., lists others assigned to the first century, but this dating is not without dispute: XVI (Jordan, see below: 2nd/3rd c. AD); CXI (GMPT: 3rd/4th c. AD); XV? (GMPT: 3rd c. AD); XXXa, XXXIb and XXXIa are oracular questions and so can be excluded (so GMPT).

[44]Many extant spells are exemplars into which the magician would insert the client's name. Evidence such as the presence of spelling blunders indicate that the recipes were not well understood by the practitioners; the style of script can indicate a spell was professionally produced. Acts 19:19 indicates that there was a large market for magic books in the NT period.

magical papyri are much older than the papyri themselves.[47] For my purposes, the dating question is not crucial, since the testimony of the papyri and the curse tablets combine to show that the connection between the *daimons* and the dead was made across the several centuries on either side of the NT period.

The connection with the dead is often reinforced by the context of usage. Many of the papyrus spells were used in connection with graves and corpses, and several have been found in graves, even in the mouth of a mummy (PGM XIXa). Most of the curse tablets come from graves;[48] some from other places connected with the underworld, such as chthonic sanctuaries, or wells and other bodies of water.[49] This is not simply because such places were convenient 'openings' to the underworld deities, with the corpse being used like a 'pillar-box',[50] but, insofar as these spells are 'letters', many are addressed to the corpse,[51] either in an attempt to enlist help in gaining the power of an underworld god, or, more importantly for my purposes, to enlist the ghost itself.

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[45]*Cf.* the curse tablets provide evidence across a milennium. The 'confession inscriptions' also provide an analogy: '... the dated confession inscriptions themselves prove precisely how persistently a religious practice can be maintained over two centuries, even to details of wording', Versnel, 'Cursing', 76. It is also relevant that magical assumptions and practices seem to be fairly uniform across cultures and over large time spans.

[46]Although certainty is impossible, due to varying potential durability of different materials, the continued practice of writing on lead even when other mediums were available may be an example; retrograde writing may be another, becoming '... "petrified" in the ritual and henceforth assum[ing] greater significance,' C.A. Faraone, 'The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells', *Magika Hiera*, 7–8; and perhaps even the use of foreign words as if their efficacy depended upon their non-translation.

[47]'Detailed instructions for the manufacture and burial of *defixiones* are preserved in the magical handbooks of the third and fourth centuries A.D. and seem to be in general agreement with the archaeological evidence for the earlier periods, *e.g.*, *PGM* V 304; VII 394, 417; IX; XXXVI 1–35, 231; LVIII, Faraone, 'Agonistic', n. 5.

[48]SGD 1 & 2 were actually placed in the right hand of the deceased.

[49]Only later tablets originate in wells, see D.R. Jordan, 'Two Inscribed Lead Tablets from a Well in the Athenian Kerameikos', *AM* 95 (1980) 231f.

[50]R. Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (London: Duckworth, 1985) 6, 86, following D.C. Kurtz, & J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London, 1971) 217.

[51]*Cf.* Faraone, 'Agonistic', 4; Jordan, 'Kerameikos', 234.

b) The Magical Papyri

Many of the spells in the Magical papyri show us that the *daimons* manipulated by the magician were patently connected to the spirits of the dead.

The invocation of the *daimon*s in the dark (οἱ ἐν τῷ cκότει δαίμονεc ..., PGM XXXVI.138); or those 'beneath the earth' (δαίμονεc οἱ ὑπὸ τὸν χθόνον, 146), can be compared with the notion that it is the dead who are away from the light.[52] These '*daimons* of men who once gazed on the light' (δαίμονεc ἀνθρώπων οἱ πρὶν φάος εἰcορόωντεc, Preisendanz, vol. II p.239, 9; *cf.* PGM [I.317], IV.444=1965), are those who dwell 'in the region of the corpses' (νεκύων ἐπὶ χῶρον, IV.446=1968 *cf.* VIII.81).

It is from this region that the spells often seek to enlist an 'attendant' (πάρεδροc, PGM I.1 and 42) or an 'assistant' (παραcτάτηc, PGM IV.1849f.). According to 'a tested spell for invisibility' (4th / 5th c. AD), after 'taking an eye of an ape or of a corpse that has died a violent death ... ' (λαβὼν πιθήκου ὀφθαλμὸν ἢ νέκυοc βιοθανάτου ..., PGM I.248), the user is to say 'Rise up, infernal *daimon*, ...' (ἀνάcτηθι, δαίμων καταχθόνιε, 253). The use of the corpse of one killed violently makes it clear that the magician is conjuring the spirit of this dead person, the '*daimon* below the ground'.

In 'Nephotes to Psammetichos, an invocation to Typhon/ Helios', we read (PGM IV.245ff.) that at Typhon's name the ground, 'the depths of the sea, Hades, Heaven, the sun, the moon, the visible chorus of stars, the whole universe all tremble, the name which when it is uttered forcibly brings gods and *daimons* to it (θεοὺc καὶ δαίμοναc ἐπ" αὐτὸ βίᾳ φέρει)'. Having used the invocation 'whomever you called will appear, god or dead man (ὃν φωνεῖc, θεοc ἢ νέκυc), and he will give an answer' (249).

The use of an assistant *daimon* who is the spirit of a dead person is especially clear in the love charms, as exemplified by the 'Wondrous Spell for binding a lover' (PGM IV.296–466).[53] Two figures are made,

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[52]'To see the light' is a standard Homeric image for being alive (*Il* 18.61; *Od*. 4.540 *etc*). This was imitated by the later poets, for whom, conversely, to leave the sun's light meant to die (Hes. *Op*. 155, *cf. Theog*. 669; *Hymn to Demeter* 35). A departed soul could be called back into the light (Aesch. *Pers*. 630; *cf.* PsPhoc. 100f.). *Cf.* the darkness of the underworld in the series of curse tablets in D.R. Jordan, 'Defixiones from a Well Near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora', *Hesperia* 54 (1985) 205–255.

[53]For a parallel text see SuppMag 49 (3rd/4th c. AD).

inscribed and pierced, a similar procedure to that used in the curse tablets.[54] The tablet is tied to the figures and they are all placed beside the grave of one who has died untimely or violently as the sun sets (332f., *cf.* 435). The spell is written and then recited. Alongside the chthonic gods, the binding spell is entrusted to the chthonic *daimons* (δαίμοσι καταχθονίοις),[55] to men and women who have died untimely deaths, to youths and maidens (ἀώροις τε | καὶ ἀώραις, μέλλαξί τε καὶ παρθένοις), to lend their aid. It then adjures all the *daimons* in this place (πάντας δαίμονας | τοὺς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ), *i.e.* the cemetery, to come to the aid of this *daimon* (τῷ δαί | μονι τούτῳ), *i.e.* the particular corpse in the grave, for the magician's use. He then calls upon the *daimon* of the corpse: 'Arouse yourself, whoever you may be, whether male or female, ...' (ἀνέγειρέ μοιcαυτόν, ὅctις ποτ' εἶ, | εἴτε ἄρρην, εἴτε θῆλυc, ...). Later, the spell reminds the *daimons* of the great name by which they tremble, and once again the *daimon* of the corpse is invoked, this time with the special term νεκύδαιμον, 'corpse *daimon*' (361, 368, 396f.). This ghost is told: 'Rouse only yourself from the repose which holds you, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go ...' (369f. ἔγειρον μόνον[56]cεαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆc ἐχούcηc | | cε ἀναπαύcεωc, ὅctιc ποτὲ εἶ, εἴτε ἄρρηc, εἴτε θῆ | λυc, καὶ ὕπαγε ...).

As in several other charms, Helios is invoked — the one who not only rules heaven and earth, but also 'Chaos and Hades, where Men's *daimons* dwell who once gazed on the light' — because the magician wishes him to bring up the *daimon* he wants to use, the one from the grave (442–448):[57] 'Hear, blessed one, for I call you who rule Heaven and earth, and even now I beg you, blessed one, Unfailing one, the master of the world, If you go to the depths of earth and search The

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[54]An almost identical figure with a lead tablet has been found in Egypt. See S. Kambitsis, 'Une nouvelle tablette magique d'Égypte, Musée du Louvre, Inv. E 27145, 3e/4e siècle', *BIFAO* 76 (1976), 213–23. Photograph: J. Gager (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: University Press, 1992) 98.

[55]This phrase is also found in DTA 99 (3rd c. BC).

[56]This appears to be an indication of the fear in which these spells were used: he doesn't want the *daimon* to bring any 'uninvited guests', who may not, perhaps, be as containable!; *cf.* the protective measures recommended in the spells.

[57]Such Helios invocations assume the ancient view of the Sun's nocturnal journey through the underworld, known both in Semitic culture (*cf.* the Hittite Prayer of Kantuzilis: 'O Sun God, when thou goest down to the nether world [to be] with him, forget not to speak with that patron god of mine and apprise him of Kantuzilis' plight,' ANET 400–401, ll.1–5) and Greek (*Od.* X.190f.).*Cf.* the prominent rôle played by the Sun god in Mesopotamian ghost incantations; Scurlock, *Magical Means*, 179f., 264f., 305, 328, *etc.*

regions of the dead, send this *daimon* (δαίμονα τοῦτον), ...' This *daimon* of the corpse, once delivered, will then be sent to the woman the man wishes to draw to him: 'Be kind to me, forefather, scion of The world, self-gendered, fire-bringer, aglow Like gold, shining on mortals, master of The world , / daimon of restless fire, unfailing, With gold disk, sending earth pure light in beams. Send the *daimon*, whomever I have requested, to her, NN' (458–62).[58]

Another love/fetching charm (SuppMag 44) confirms the connection from the opposite direction when it assigns to a soul the role accorded elsewhere to a *daimon* : the woman is fetched 'by means of the soul of the one who died prematurely' (l. 13 διὰ | τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀώ[[ρ]]ρου).[59]

Addressing the ghost of the corpse is such a standard feature of the magical procedure that, in time, the practice generated a special word. Many later spells are addressed to a νεκύδαιμον (PGM IV.361, 397, 368; ; IV.2031, 2060; V.334; XII.494, plural [ν]εκυδαίμων[α]ς, <κατὰ> νεκύ[ων]; XIXa.15, also called κύριε δαῖμον, 151; SuppMag 49;[60] *cf.* IV.1474 f. τὰ εἴδωλα τῶν νεκύων). Of special interest in this regard is PGM XVI, because it was originally assigned by handwriting to the first century AD, even though more recent estimates place it more probably in the second or third.[61] This papyrus contains a love charm repeated nine times virtually word for word, apart from the different magical names and gods inserted, the ghost of the corpse being invoked at least 8 times (1, 9, 17f., 25, 34, 43, 54, 61, ?67, ?73).

Peculiar to magical texts, the word underlines what is the practice of other spells. They are addressing the spirit of the dead: 'O corpse-*daimon*' or, better, 'O ghost'.[62]

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[58]'The drawing spell of king Pituos' has similar features (PGM IV.1968ff). For other love charms employing the spirits of the dead, *cf.* PGM IV.1390ff; XV; XIXa; SuppMag 49; 50; 51; 45; *etc.*

[59]The charm ends with a command in the plural (ἄξατε), which 'may be directed to the individual ἄωρος [= one who died early] whose soul is mentioned in line 14 as well as to the other νεκυδαίμονες in the same cemetery,' R. Daniel, 'Two Love-Charms', *ZPE* 19 (1975) 264.

[60]D.R. Jordan, 'A Love Charm with Verses', *ZPE* 72 (1988) 245–59.

[61]D.R. Jordan, 'A New Reading of a Papyrus Love Charm in the Louvre', *ZPE* 74 (1988) 232–233, who provides a number of improvements on PGM.

[62]Jordan, 'Love Charm', translates both νεκύδαιμον and δαίμον 'ghost' in SuppMag 49.

c) Curse Tablets

Archeological discoveries have yielded some 1100 curse tablets, or *defixiones,* which 'became popular in the fifth century BC and continued in use in Mediterranean lands until at least the sixth century of our era'. They not only '... provide our best continuous evidence for the practice of magic in the millenium from classical times to the close of antiquity,'[63] but also confirm that the *daimons* were connected to the dead.

The use of such tablets for cursing enemies, part of the malevolent magic mentioned in the literary sources (*e.g.* Plato, *Resp.* 364B), is attested for the first century. A Flavian inscription from Tuder may thank one Iuppiter O.M. for bringing to light a buried *defixio* which cursed a number of *decuriones* (CIL 11.4639), although this is not the only reading.

> If *defixia* simply means 'attached' and if *monumentis* refers to a public monument, the result would be a public act rather than an instance of a *defixio.*[64] But if *defixia* is used in a technical sense, that is, in preparing a curse tablet, and if *monumentis* refers to tombs, we would have a clear reference to a *defixio.*[65]

In an earlier and more famous example, *defixiones* discovered in the walls and floors of the house of Germanicus in Syrian Antioch associated with his supposedly unnatural death in AD 19, brought terror to the masses and led to the execution of a scapegoat:[66]

> ... and it is a fact that explorations in the floor and walls brought to light the remains of human bodies, spells, curses, leaden tablets engraved with the name Germanicus, charred and blood-smeared ashes, and others of the implements of witchcraft by which it is believed the living soul can be devoted to the powers of the grave. (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.69)

Thus, as with the magic in the papyri, Tacitus knows that these tablets were used in the attempt to enlist the forces of the dead to the malevolent purposes of the magician (or his client).

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[63]For this paragraph, SGD, 151.
[64]This argument reflects that of D.R. Jordan, who does not think curse tablets were involved (*per litt.* 2/4/96).
[65]Gager, 135, who takes it in the latter sense, as does Versnel, 'Cursing', 63.
[66]*Cf.* the bronze tablet, inscribed in Greek, discovered in a tomb, which was reported to be associated with Caesar's death, Suet. *Julius* 81.

In the earlier tablets, the corpse is not regarded as a power at all, but its very inertness is the key to the efficacy of the curses. A change occurs, however, in about the 4th c. BC, and the dead becomes a power to be invoked.[67] About this time also the spirit of the dead begins to be called δαίμων: DTA 102 (4th c. BC) is an epistle sent to a corpse, called a [δ]αίμων;[68] and in DTA 99 (3rd c. BC) the δαίμων χθόνιος is, once again, properly regarded as the spirit of the corpse.[69] This usage is amply attested in the later curse tablets.[70]

As in the magical papyri, the later curse tablets also address the νεκύδαιμον,[71] the *daimon*(s) of this place[72] or those buried here,[73] or even '*daimons*, those roaming about in this place',[74] *i.e.* the grave or cemetery. Although occasionally the νεκύδαιμον is given a name,[75] i.e. that of the corpse, more frequently it is addressed as the *daimon* 'whoever you are', *i.e.* the anonymous corpse.[76]

In sum: the curse tablets provide evidence that the spirits of the dead were evoked as powers since the 4th c. BC, and at that time they were also called *daimons*. Both the curse tablets and the papyri show that this belief in the *daimons* as the dead eventually became enshrined in magical vocabulary with the term νεκύδαιμον. It is in the midst of this progression — which amounts to a strengthening of the same belief — that the Gospel writers spoke of Jesus casting out *daimons*.

But before coming to the Gospel material, it is worth observing that the same connection is found in writings which are culturally akin

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[67]For this paragraph, Bravo, 'Tablette'.

[68]Bravo, 'Tablette', 203, 'Le démon, ici, est évidemment le démon du mort auprès duquel l'auteur va déposer sa tablette.'

[69]'[On] a eu certainement raison de voir dans le δαίμων χθόνιος le démon du défunt,' Bravo, 'Tablette', 204f.

[70]See, for example, the 3rd c. AD tablets discussed in D.R. Jordan, 'Late Feasts for Ghosts', in R. Hägg, (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence. Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult. Athens, 22–24 November 1991* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute Athens, 1994) 131–143; *cf.* PGM IV.1390–1495.

[71]DT 234, 235, 237, 239, 240, 242 — all 1st c. AD (Audollent); SGD 152, 153, 160, 162; BM 1878.10–19.2 see D.R. Jordan, 'Inscribed Lead Tablets from the Games in the Sanctuary of Poseidon', *Hesperia* 63/1 (1994) 123 n. 22; SuppMag 42.11f; SuppMag 46.

[72]DT 22, 38 (= SuppMag 54), 198, *cf.* 234.

[73]DT 25, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, [32, 33], 34, 35, 271; SupplMag 45.

[74]DT 38 (= SuppMag 54) ll. 35f.: δ[αί | μο]νες οἱ ἐν τῳ τόπω τού[τω.] φοιτῶντες ...

[75]SuppMag 37, 47, 50; PGM XXXII and, for the formulary allowing such insertions, IV.2180.

[76]DT 234, 235, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, [249] — all 1st c. AD (Audollent); Jordan, 'Agora', 12.

to them.

1.2 Daimons *and the Dead in Hellenistic Jewish Literature*

The connection between the *daimons* and the dead, as well as its exploitation in magical practices, can be discerned in the LXX, Ps-Phocylides, Philo and Josephus.

i. The LXX

In the LXX, the δαιμ- group associates idolatry with the worship of *daimons*,[77] and is closely linked with the dead, and with magic.[78] Reflecting as it does necromantic practices, *i.e.* calling on the dead to aid the living, Isa. 65 (esp. vv. 3, 11) illustrates all three features in the one passage.

ii. Pseudo-Phocylides

The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides (30 BC – AD 40), which show a knowledge of magic,[79] probably assumes this connection when it warns

> μὴ τύμβον φθιμένων ἀνορύξῃς μηδ' ἀθέατᾶ δείξῃς ἠελίῳ καὶ δαιμόνιον χόλον ὄρσῃς,
>
> 'Do not dig up the grave of the deceased, neither expose | to the sun

[77]Deut. 32:17; Isa. 65:3, 11 (S δαίμων; A B δαιμονίῳ; MT dG"); Ψ 96 (95):5; 106 (105):37.

[78]All usages in Tobit (3:8; 17; 6:7, 7, 13, 14, 15, 17; 8:3) refer to the *daimon* Asmodeus, whose sole function is to kill, and whose 'exorcism' is achieved by magical means; Isa. 13:21, 34:14; Bar. 4:7, 35 (*cf.* Rev. 18:2) use the *topos* of a destroyed city being filled with *daimons*/ghosts; and Y 91 (90):6 (Sm δαιμονιώδης) was appropriated by magical texts for centuries. More generally, prohibitions against magical practices indicate that these were also part of things Canaanite, as was human sacrifice (which can be detected behind the texts in previous note). Thus idolatry, magic, and *daimons* /ghosts can all be connected.

[79]#149 explicitly refers to magic; but magical practices may also lie behind 100–102 (rather than grave-robbery for medical dissection) and 150, despite the fact that this has apparently not been canvassed previously; *cf.* P.W. Van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

> what may not be seen, lest you stir up the *daimonic* anger.' (PsPhoc. 100f.)

iii Philo

Although, for the sake of his Hellenistic audience, Philo equates the angelic beings of the Jewish literature with the *daimons* (as intermediate beings) of the Greek literature, the very fact that the *daimons* are also placed upon his continuum of souls indicates that they are related (*Somn.* I.135–141; *Gig.* 6–12), if not explicitly equated (*Gig.* 16) to souls.

The connection between *daimons* and the dead emerges very clearly when Philo reports that Gaius murdered his father-in-law 'after dismissing all thought of his dead wife's *daimons*' (πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς δαίμοσι τῆς ἀποθανούσης γυναικός). This incidental reference (*Legat.* 65) shows that the connection existed in Rome in AD 39–40 and, given the lack of either critique or explanation, that it was part of the repertoire of both author and audience.

iv. Josephus

Several passages in Josephus assume the connection between the *daimons* and the dead.[80] To provide but one example, Josephus says that, despite its tendency to kill the one attempting to pluck it,[81] the plant rue possesses one highly-prized virtue:

> τὰ γὰρ καλούμενα δαιμόνια, ταῦτα δὲ πονηρῶν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπων πνεύματα τοῖς ζῶσιν εἰσδυόμενα καὶ κτείνοντα τοὺς βοηθείας μὴ τυγχάνοντας, αὕτη ταχέως ἐξελαύνει, κἂν προσενεχθῇ μόνον τοῖς νοσοῦσι.
>
> for the so-called *daimons* — in other words, the spirits of wicked men which enter the living and kill them unless aid is forthcoming — are promptly expelled by this root, if merely applied to the patients. (*BJ* 7.185; *cf. AJ* 8.45-49)

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[80]The *daimon*ic powers of the dead worked on the side of justice (*BJ* 1.82, 84; *AJ* 13.314, 317, 415–416, *etc.*); as vengeful ghosts (*BJ* 1.599, 607, *cf. AJ* 17.1) or spirits of the blessed dead (*BJ* 6.47).

[81]There were protective spells against the dangers of picking plants; *cf.* PGM IV.286–295.

Here the *daimons* are defined in terms of the ghosts of the wicked, bent on human destruction.

To sum up part I: it would be too much to claim that all people everywhere automatically connected the *daimonic* with the dead. In philosophical circles more-elaborate *daimon*ologies had emerged and were emerging in which the *daimon*ic spirits were intermediate beings. However, it is clear that at the more popular level, as represented by the magical world, *daimons* were persistently identified with ghosts, and that this also protrudes into the literary sources, both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish. Since the early readers of Mark were most probably closer to the world of magic than they were to the world of the philosophers, Part II asks how such an identification would affect the hearing of Mark's four exorcisms.[82]

II. Hearing Jesus' Exorcisms from this Point of View

The involvement of ghosts in exorcisms is well attested from Ancient Egypt, Ancient Babylon and Assyria, and in the second century Greek writers Lucian (*Philops.* 16)[83] and Philostratus (*VitAp.* 3.38; 4.20). Later readers apparently read Gospel exorcism accounts from this point of view, despite the Fathers' objections,[84] and perhaps this would have been automatic for many of Mark's earlier readers as well. What would such a reading be like?

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[82]The connection is also relevant for other portions of Mark, such as the summaries (1:32–34, 39; 3:11, 15, 22–23, 30; 6:7; 9:38), the charge made against Jesus (3:22ff), and the death of the Baptist (6:14–29). The latter two passages, and those in the following material, are dealt with more fully in my thesis.

[83]W.D. Smith, 'So-Called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece', *TAPA* 96 (1965) 403–26, claims this as the first exorcism in Gk. literature. However, a fragment of a 5th c. BC mime may allude to an exorcism; *cf.* D.L. Page, *Select Papyri III* (LCL; London & Cambridge, MA: Heinemann & Harvard University Press, 1941, repr. 1970) 73.

[84]*E.g.* Chrysostom, *Hom. on Matthew* 28, 3; 2 *Hom. on Lazarus* 6.235, 6. The critique of the *daimon*/ghost connection is at least as early as Tatian 16.1. P. Brown, 'Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity', in M. Douglas, (ed.),*Witchcraft: Confessions & Accusations* (London: Tavistock, 1970) 32, summarises: 'Where the teachings of the Fathers of the Church clash with popular belief, it is invariably in the direction of denying the *human* links involved in sorcery (they will deny, for instance, that it is the souls of the dead that are the agents of misfortune), in order to emphazise [*sic*] the purely *demonic* nature of the misfortunes that might afflict their congregations.' Their successful campaign may be a major reason for the virtual elimination of the *daimon*/ghost connection from subsequent discussion.

2.1 *Capernaum (1:21–28)*

If we are inquiring into the nature of the beings which control the man in the Capernaum synagogue, then there is not much to go on in the story. Evidently they perceived their battle with Jesus to be a struggle to the death, for they asked whether Jesus had come to destroy them (v. 24). Although there is nothing in the account itself which specifically links the 'unclean spirits' with ghosts,[85] there are several links with the world of magic (the naming; the binding, the violence and the noise on exit, vv. 24–25). Since it assumed the connection, readers familiar with magic would recognize that Jesus was being engaged by departed spirits, after the fashion of a magical encounter. The story ends having firmly established Jesus' authority over the spirits (v. 27).

What difference would it make if the hearer of this story automatically made the connection? The important thing for Mark's narrative is the spirits' question (v. 24), 'have you come to destroy us?' If Jesus does destroy the *daimons*, what would result? The hostility of ghosts to humans, whether or not those ghosts had been set upon the victim by some magician (or his client), could have many and varied unpleasant effects on ordinary life.[86] The *daimons'* question raises the possibility that Jesus had come to destroy these beings. If so, he would also end their manipulation by magicians and the resulting evil effects, thus breaking the fear of such influences and effects by which large segments of the populace were held. The question raises the exciting possibility that Jesus was about to unlock the stranglehold of the dead on the living.[87]

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[85]Equally, there is nothing to connect it with the usual 'cosmic dualism' hypothesis. Persian dualism would be rather *passé* for a Greco-Roman reader; *cf.* Brenk, 'Light', 2092.

[86]The widespread fear of ghosts can be variously illustrated, not least by the fact that both Greece and Rome had at least one annual festival for getting rid of them (Anthesteria; Lemuria); and *cf.* those in Cyrene (LSSupp 115) and Selinous, discussed in M.H. Jameson, D.R. Jordan & R.D. Kotansky, *A* Lex Sacra *from Selinous* (GRBM 11; Durham, NC: Duke University, 1993). Certain features of Attic law can also be explained in terms of the fear of ghosts; L.R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (Chicago: Ares, 1977) 89. The impact of magic upon practically every aspect of ordinary life also provides testimony to the fear of ghosts in which people must have lived; *cf.* the philosophers' need to speak against δεισιδαιμονία, 'superstition', *e.g.* Philo *Gig.* 16; Plut. *De superstitione.*

2.2 *Gerasa (5:1–20)*

The Gerasene *daimon*iac constitutes the exorcism of all exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark. Here there are specific links between this man's *daimons* and the dead.

The man is located in-the tombs, which were widely recognised as the haunts of *daimons*, not surprisingly given the discussion so far. The connection with the dead is strengthened by the links with Isaiah 65, where people sit in the tombs for necromantic purposes; and perhaps also by the man's great strength. Perhaps I can take further comfort from the fact that at least one commentator has recognised that the *daimons* possessing this man are the spirits of the dead — even speculating that they are the ghosts of those who fell in battle with the Romans![88]

Not surprisingly, there are a number of features reminiscent of magical practice in this story as well: the great cry, v. 7; the use of ὁρκίζω (v. 7)[89]—although here it is used in reverse!; μή με βασανίσῃς, the word is used in magical texts;[90] the request for the name, v. 9.[91] These features combine to make the story a clash between two great powers. The man who could not be bound (v. 4) attempts to bind Jesus (v. 7)—as if Jesus is the superior *daimon* and the *daimon* is the magician![92] Nevertheless, Jesus gains the mastery over him and his spirits instead.

Why do the *daimons* request that Jesus not send them 'out of the region' (ἔξω τῆς χώρας, v. 10)? Demonic fear is a feature of the magical spells — in fact, its *modus operandi*! But if their fear is simply of being sent outside the region of the Gerasenes (*cf.* v. 1), or even the region of

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[87]Although an actual destruction of the *daimons* would be no problem for the philosophically minded, for whom their mortality was one of the characteristics which differentiated them from the immortal gods (Plut. *De defectu* 418E), a destruction of the *daimons'* influence in this world best fits the NT material.

[88]G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 89 n. 21; 255 n. 58.

[89]This word and its compounds is extremely common in the magical texts; *cf.* Acts 19:13.

[90]S. Eitrem, *Some Notes on the Demonology of the New Testament* (Osloae: Universitetsforlaget, 1966) 24–25. See Versnel, 'Cursing', 73, for the requests for the gods to use such juridicial torture. The love charms request that the victim be tortured by their thoughts of the interested party; *eg.* DT 242, 271.

[91]*Cf.* PGM XIII.425ff the god will refuse to listen if you don't know the names.

[92]The concern to bind people and spirits is also an obvious hallmark of magical practice.

the tombs, it seems difficult to account for. Instead, they are probably referring to an underworld space. As we saw above, in the spells invoking Helios, the region of the dead is the realm in which the *daimons* are recruited by Helios on his nightly underworld journey, to be released by him for the use of the necromancer in the upper world.[93] This fear may be illustrated by the threat of a silver phylaktery to remove them from this region, which allows the possibility of continued traffic with the world above, to regions 'below the springs and the abyss'.[94] Does the fear of such nether regions lie behind their question?[95]

To our reader who connects *daimons* with the departed spirits, this man from the tombs, is literally filled with a legion of the dead. The clash with Jesus shows that Jesus can control such hoards, cast them out, and even banish them from the region which allows them to exert an influence in the upper world. These spirits of death were bent on destruction (*cf. BJ* 7.185; *VitAp* 3.38), but Jesus, acting as a superior spirit, certainly sent them back to their proper domain, and perhaps even 'destroyed' them.

In the previous incident narrated by Mark, several questions had been raised which received no answer, and so function as guides to the reading of what follows. The disciples had asked 'don't you care that we are perishing?' (4:38) and 'who then is this that even the winds and waves obey him?' (4:41).[96] The questions begin to find answers in Gerasa, where Jesus not only demonstrates that he does care for one who is perishing under the evil and destructive influence of the world of the dead, but also that he is the one who can liberate people from such beings. The story is cast as a contest between Jesus and the power(s) of death. The man leaves the tombs and once again enters ordinary life. The 'dead' had come to life again.

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[93]*Cf.* also the *defixio* SEG 803 (3rd c. AD) which asks Helios to send 'the wailing of the violently killed' upon an opponent, presumably by bringing their *daimons* up with him.

[94]GMA 52, *cf.* D.R. Jordan, 'A New Reading of a Phylactery from Beirut', *ZPE* 88 (1991), 61–69 See also PGM IV.1247f., where the *daimons* are bound with fetters and delivered into 'the black chaos in perdition' εἰc τὸ μέλαν χάοc ἐν ταῖc ἀπωλείαιc.

[95]This is how Luke takes the reference (8:31); *cf.* Mt. 8:29 the fear of torture before the appointed time — perhaps when they are sent into the Abyss (*cf.* 25:41)?

[96]Jesus' question regarding the disciples' (lack of) faith, also guides the following stories (v. 40).

2.3 *Syro-Phonecia (7:24–30)*

The exorcism of the Syro-Phonecian woman's daughter does not tell us anything extra about the *daimon*'s metaphysics. In the flow of the story, however, it reinforces the fact that Jesus can deal with such spirits. The new twist here is that he does so even for a Greek.

2.4 *The Boy at the Base of the Mountain (9:14–29)*

Many such boys were used in magical divination, to channel the spirits of the dead.[97] The destructive nature of the afflicting spirit is evident (v. 22), as would be expected if it were a vengeful ghost. Jesus has no doubt about his ability to deal with such a spirit, and commands it to come out and never to enter again (v. 25). This latter prohibition is also found in magical materials,[98] as is the discussion of 'kinds' of *daimon* (v. 29).[99]

Jesus apparently knows his spirits, and his exorcism is so powerful that he appears to kill the boy (v. 26).[100] The initial shock (perhaps he has come to destroy the *daimons*, but in the process does he destroy their victims too?) reinforces the ultimate lesson, for when he raises the boy, as if from the dead (v. 27), someone who regarded *daimons* as ghosts would see a powerful demonstration that Jesus'

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[97]For the use of boys in magic *cf.* PGM V.1–53; 370–446, *cf.* VII.664–685; VII.348–58; 540–578; XIII.749–759; LXII.24–46; also frequently in PDM. *Cf.* Plut. *De defectu* 418 B. The story itself is similar to *VitAp* 3.38. See further, T. Hopfner, 'Die Kindermedien in den griechisch-ägyptischen Zauberpapyri', *Receuil d'études dédiées à la mémoire de N. P. Kondakov* (Prague, 1926) 65–74.

[98]The forbidding of return is 'no superfluous addition', Eitrem, *Notes*, 33; *cf. AJ* 7.2.5; 8.45-49; *VitAp*. 4.20 and, by implication, PGM IV.1254; 3015: 'Consistent with this prevention, according to old Assyrian magic, a good *daimon* had to take the place left vacant by the evil one who is driven out'.

[99]PGM IV.3040 asks for the identification of the kind of *daimon* & 3080 promises deliverance from whatever kind, *cf.* V.165. For one unmoved by prayer, IV.1786.

[100]Chrysostom mentions the slaying of boys in connection with magic (see n. 84 above) and Simon Magus claims to have used such a boy in *Clementine Recognitions* II.13, 15. Is this practice behind PGM IV.2647 and PsPhoc. 150 (given 149)? Clearchus tells of Aristotle's encounter with a magician who could draw out the soul of a sleeping boy to leave his body like that of a corpse; see the discussion in H. Lewy, 'Aristotle and the Jewish Sage According to Clearchus of Soli', *HTR* 31 (1938) 208f. For a discussion of 'ritual murder', *cf.* A. Henrichs, *Die Phoinikika des Lollianos. Fragmente eines neuen griechischen Romans* (Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 14; Bonn: Habelt, 1972) 31–37.

dealings with the powers of the dead issued in'resurrection life' for their victims.

III. Implications

For the person who viewed the *daimons* as ghosts of the dead, Jesus' exorcisms would be seen as an assault upon the world of the dead, and even upon death itself.

Later sources reveal that Jesus was mistaken for a magician,[101] i.e. as someone who manipulated the spirits of the dead. This probably began within Jesus' life time. The unknown exorcist used Jesus' name (9:38), as some of the magicians of the Magical Papyri would do at a later date. The Pharisees accused him of manipulating the *daimons* through the prince of *daimons* (3:22). It is highly likely that when Herod explained Jesus' activity by the speculation that John had been raised, he was thinking of Jesus using John's ghost to produce miraculous results.[102] As both an ἀκέφαλος, 'beheaded one', and a βιαιοθάνατος, 'one who was killed violently', John would have a very powerful ghost (*cf.* Lucian, *Philops.* 9).

But Jesus was also different to other magicians. In Mark's story, amongst other things, he was cast as a superior spirit (5:1–20); rumoured to be a ghost-manipulator (6:14ff); and even mistaken for a ghost himself (6:49).[103] The end of the story presents him as a crucified man, *i.e.* one with the potential to be a very powerful spirit indeed.

The *daimons* were scared that he had come to destroy them. He was able to destroy the legion of ghosts in Gerasa, as well as to liberate the young Greek girl and the boy at the foot of the mountain in a lasting way. All this raises this question for our reader: Did he simply have the power to manipulate the world of the dead, like any other magician? Or had he begun an assault on the dead, in order to break the stranglehold which the dead held on the living?

By the end of the story, Mark's readers are left gazing upon the empty tomb of a man who had been crucified, and hearing the declaration that he had risen. Apparently Jesus' assault on the dead

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[101]*Cf.* M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (London: Victor Golancz, 1978) ch. 4.
[102]C.H. Kraeling, 'Was Jesus Accused of Necromancy?', *JBL* 59 (1940) 147-157; Smith, *Magician*, 33f.
[103]Interestingly, φάντασμα, 'phantom', becomes δαιμόνιον in the Syriac Sinaiticus.

was complete,[104] and the dead would no longer hold sway over life because a far greater spirit was now alive in their world.[105] Mark's story holds promise that his readers could look at their world with new eyes, and face it with less fear, because a man who had been crucified had risen from the dead.[106]

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[104]In this case, his exorcisms would have an integral, qualitative connection with the resurrection from the dead, not merely an indirect connection through some abstract concept of divine power or rule.

[105]*Cf.* Lk. 24:39, *cf.* C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM, 1990) 919. Ignatius' loose rendering (*Smyr.* 3.2) has: 'I am not a bodiless *daimon*', (οὐκ εἰμὶ δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον); as did the *Preaching of Peter* (*cf.* Origen, *de Princ.* i. prol. 8).

[106]Although my focus has been on Mark, the connection between *daimons* and the dead has further implications for the reading of the other Gospels and, indeed, for the daimonology of the NT.